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See story on page 29

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"It's my Zen. It's my time to relax and experiment and have fun." - *Dory Redman*

See story page 18

ON THE COVER

Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett of Sinai Temple is happy to be planning the synagogue's 60th Anniversary Gala with the help of congregation President Ken Lesser.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 29

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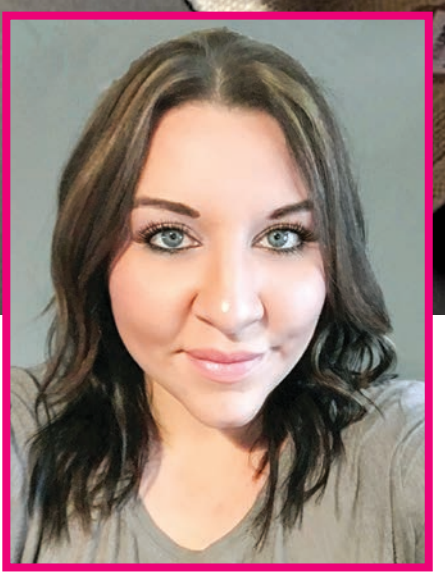
Artist creates 'Jenuine Designs'

Mother of three enjoys using her creativity

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Jennifer Freeman's jewelry designs include one-of-a-kind handmade stretch bracelets.

Courtesy photos



Jewelry designer Jennifer Freeman also enjoys helping people create events.

All early signs pointed to Jennifer Freeman having a creative career. From an early age, she enjoyed making crafts.

"My mom used to take me to buy stuff. I would make friendship bracelets and sell them on the corner for a quarter when I was probably 6 or 7," Freeman recalled.

A graduate of Newington High School, she worked in kitchen design for several years. She got her first job in the field, in customer service, when an NHS guidance counselor saw an advertisement in a newspaper and passed it on.

"She knew I wanted to do interior design or decorating," Freeman said. "I threw it on my dresser."

It took her a week to call the company, Viking Kitchen Cabinets in New Britain.

"They hired me. They were looking customer service, just someone to answer the telephone," she said.

"I worked there for several years. I just kind of worked my way up the ladder from customer service to sales and design. I did purchasing for the company, then I ended up leaving and going into custom kitchens."

She worked for United Cabinets in Newington before returning to Viking.

"I think the design part was my favorite part because I love to be creative. When the customer called at the end, when everything they dreamed of was in their kitchen, that was the best feeling," she said.

"I loved the finished product when they were so excited. It's high investment, so it was always a great feeling, when oh my God, you did everything they wanted. It was something they dreamed of and I was able to help them," she added.

After 15 years of designing kitchens, Freeman was ready for a new challenge and decided to launch her own company Jenuine Designs & Events. The first part of her business is jewelry.

"The jewelry is something I do in my down time, in between taking the kids to soccer and working. I like to make my own jewelry, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, hand-stamped personalized charms. It's fun," she said.

She has three children, Emma, Ethan and Dylan. Dylan has started to help out with the business.

"[He's] been shadowing me and helping me. It's nice time for me to spend with him," she noted.

She does custom jewelry designs and also sells her work at Bella Flora in Rocky Hill. Her items are priced at $10 to $30.

"I try to keep it more like costume jewelry. I try to keep my pricing down so it's reasonable," she said.

"It's not gold jewelry. With it being more of a costume style, it depends on the piece, the time it takes me to make [it], I can afford to put it at that price range."

She describes her jewelry as up to date.

"I would love to be able to use my creativity to help other people get what they want."

– Jennifer Freeman

"It's more of a current style. If I find something that catches my eye, that I like, I go with it," she said.

She's able to visualize the piece before making it.

"That's a great thing to have when you're making jewelry. I personally pick one thing [at a time] and work on that and only that. If I make earrings, I start with that and make a bunch of earrings. I just put things together until it's something I would wear," Freeman said.

"I've been doing it for so many years, I think I have an eye for that, so I know what goes together. I'm really just experimenting. Every piece is unique and different."

She also makes other crafts such as ornaments and wreaths. The second part of her business is events.

"I always did events on the side. I helped people with events, [such as] birthday parties or weddings on the side for friends for free. They would say, 'You're so good at this. This is your calling.' This is what I wanted to do. It's something for me.

"There was a lot of stress with the kitchen design. I wanted to do something that was fun, something that got me up in the morning and I wanted to do," she said. "It's still in the starting stages."

She's been gaining experience, helping out part time at Bella Flora. She connected with the shop about 2 1/2 years ago.

"I go in and help with making arrangements. I help with events, the setup of weddings and things like that. I'm kind of Mary's in-house wedding coordinator," Freeman said.

"She has brides come in and want help with things she doesn't do. I don't want to say I'm an event planner [working with] DJs and caterers. It's more décor than anything, like a centerpiece or place cards, different things to make their event unique."

Mary Thielke, owner of Bella Flora, started selling Freeman's jewelry the day after she learned she made it. She called the artist an asset to her shop.

"She has such creative and imaginative designs. She has helped me streamline my everyday duties. I think I have also guided Jen's talents at floral arranging and she has soared. She is one of the gems at

Bella Flora," Thielke said.

Freeman said clients sometimes pick out themes for an event, such as starfish. She has helped create such events as a masquerade ball for a friend's daughter's 16th birthday and a red carpet fashion show birthday party. A "Craftapalooza" party featured different stations where the attendees could make items to take home.

"I think kids love it more than going to bowling or golf," she said.

Another birthday event that she did with a friend for their children was a combination boot camp and ninja training.

"We had a course in the backyard. They had to climb through ropes and jump through tires. The kids had a blast," she said.

"We had piñatas, so they could practice their sword swinging. We had Styrofoam blocks so they could practice chopping. And we did it for less than $200."

While she likes being creative, budget is always a big concern.

"I'm a mom, too. I know people have to have a budget. You have to keep it within a budget. With all events, budget is such a huge thing for people. I want people to understand, you tell me all the bells and whistles you want, and if it's not in your price budget, we'll figure out a way around it," she said.

"My goal is I would love to be able to use my creativity to help other people get what they want, to build my clientele, and to be able to have fun doing what I do. I want to be able to enjoy going to work every day. I want to be happy doing what I do and to make others be happy." **NL**

Learn more at facebook.com/jenuinedesignsandevents or call 860-801-1738. Find Jennifer Freeman's Jewelry at Bella Flora, 412 Cromwell Ave., Rocky Hill. Visit bellafloract.com or call 860-563-6633.

Jennifer Freeman can help create a fun party theme even on a budget, such as this Girls' Sleepover Red Carpet Fashion Show Birthday Party.

Jennifer Freeman designs jewelry such as these bracelets featured at Bella Flora in Rocky Hill.

Courtesy photos

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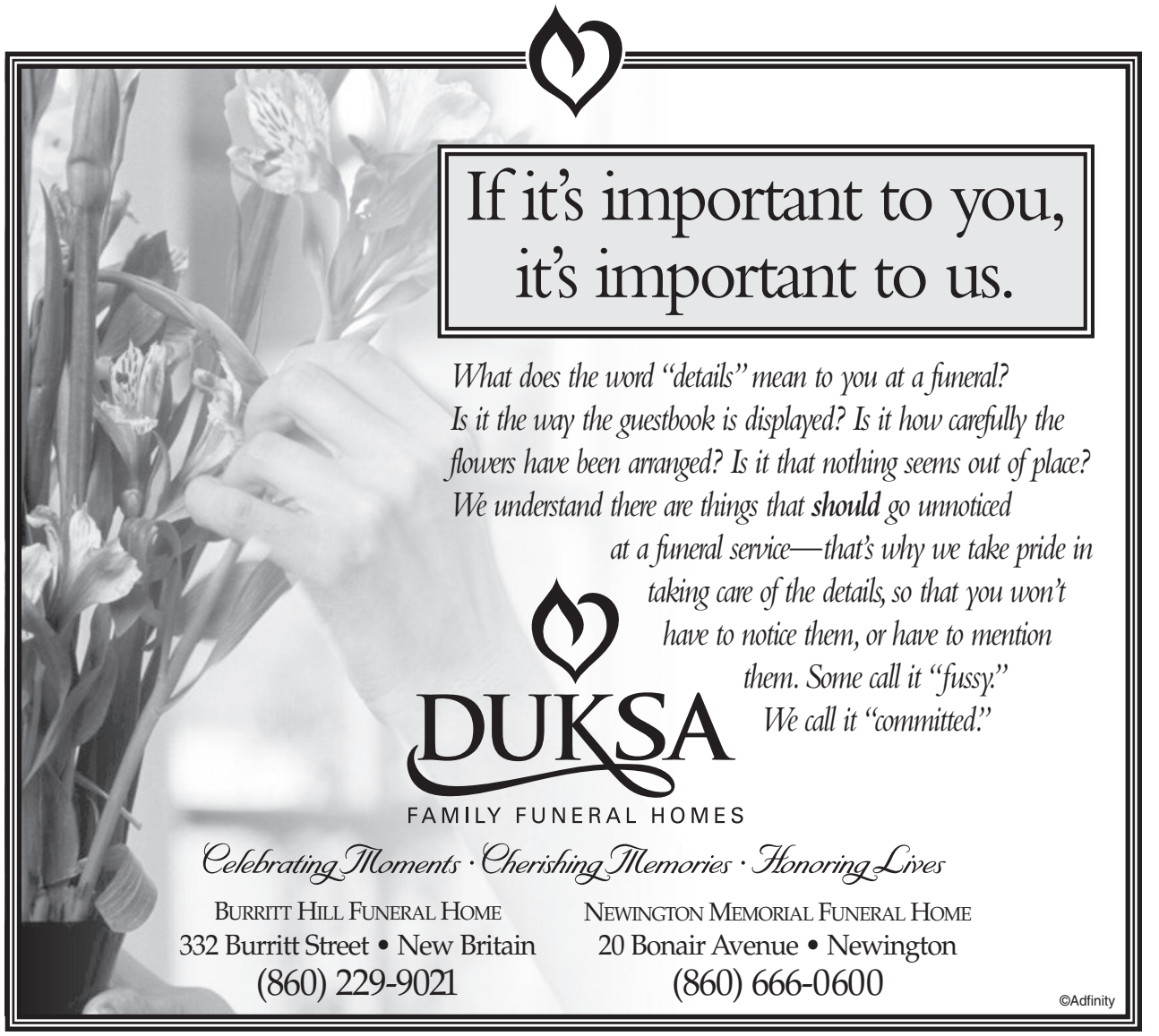
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Family is the key ingredient

Ming Moon celebrates 20 years of Chinese cuisine

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Yong Yang looked out the window of Ming Moon Chinese restaurant one sunny Friday afternoon at a man approaching the building on Market Square.

"Oh, here comes one of our favorite customers," he said with a smile as longtime Newington resident George Bennett walked in the door.

Yang stood up to greet Bennett and the two quickly talked like old friends with jokes and playful ribbing. According to Yang, these kinds of interactions are not uncommon at Ming Moon, which celebrated its 20th year in business in March.

"It's a family business, so we treat every customer like family," he said. "We see faces and we

Yong Yang, right, pictured with his wife, Amy Chen, runs Ming Moon Chinese restaurant on Market Square. Now celebrating its 20th year in business, Yang said he is happy to provide fresh food to his customers in a town that he loves.

Photo by Allie Rivera

Jeremy Hwang, M.D., Ph.D.
Ophthalmology

Saint Francis Welcomes Jeremy Hwang, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Hwang, an ophthalmologist, has joined the medical staff at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

Dr. Hwang received his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, New York. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at the Doheny Eye Institute, University of Southern California Medical Center, Los Angeles, and a fellowship in glaucoma at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

A member of Solinsky EyeCare, LLC, Dr. Hwang specializes in the medical and surgical management of glaucoma, as well as cataracts and comprehensive ophthalmology.

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know what they like. It's like your father or your sister, you know what their favorite is."

Although Yang runs the business, it was his father Shuang Yang who opened the restaurant 20 years ago and still owns it today. A first generation immigrant, Yang's father chose Newington as the place to raise his family and ultimately start his business.

"Everything is so good and it's so fresh."

– George Bennett

"We just love this town. That's why we picked here," he said.

While his father and uncle ran the business, Yang enrolled as a student in the Newington Public Schools, eventually graduating from Newington High School. Now that the older generation is looking to retire, he has taken over the day-to-day operations.

"My father wants the younger people to come in and have younger ideas," Yang said. "We're always looking for a way to move forward."

One way he has taken the restaurant forward is with adaptations to changing technology. Ming Moon has a website where customers can order online as well as QR codes, small black and white squares that can be scanned on a smartphone and brings users directly to the restaurant's menu.

"It's more convenient for people to order their food," he said.

Since opening 20 years ago, Yang has seen a great deal of other changes as positive word of mouth began to spread.

"When we started this business, it was bad. We only had three people working here and we worked really hard, but my father didn't give up," he said. "Now we have people who always come back."

Yang credited part of the restaurant's success to its dedication to being a family business in all ways possible.

"You see back there?" he said, pointing behind the counter where others were busily preparing food. "That's my wife, that's my mom, some people in back are my cousins and that's my longtime friend. It's all family and we all know each other so well."

Yang said having that consistent crew of family members has also led to consistent food for customers.

"Stable people will make the same quality of food every time," he said.

Serving quality food is an important part of the restaurant's business model and what he considers another factor in its continued success.

"We try to create some healthy food for people," he said. "Our sauce, we try to add natural stuff in there, like we put more fresh ginger in there, which is good for the body, and we use fresh lemon and fresh orange."

Returning customers have noticed that Ming Moon uses only fresh ingredients, and for many of them, such as Bennett, it is a reason to return.

"Everything is so good and it's so fresh," he said. "I get their wonton soup in cold weather. It's like if grandma made you chicken soup."

Yang said he and his family consider the business a success but they never had a desire to open more locations in surrounding towns.

"It's our first one and it will be our last one," he said with a small laugh. "It's a family business and we've only got one family."

Although the family thought they could be capable of opening another location, they feared they wouldn't be able to commit to their customers as well if they did so.

"Instead, we want to make sure that this one is great," Yang said.

"In Newington, we feel like it is home," Yang said. "We try to have the best service for Newington that we can." **NL**

Ming Moon is located at 218 Market Square. It can be reached at 860-666-3322 or newingtonmingmoon.com.

"I'm a Baby Boomer. My generation has a whole different take on what it means to 'act your age.'"

Richard Heath, CEO

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VallabhDham Temple celebrates Holi

The VallabhDham Temple on Church Street celebrated the grand Hindu spring festival of Holi March 26. Hundreds of people attended the Holi-Dhuleti festivities. Colorfully dressed people of all ages participated in the event and a festival of color included playing pranks and smearing each other with gullal (colored powder).

Photos by PapaRuhi

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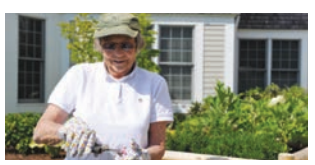

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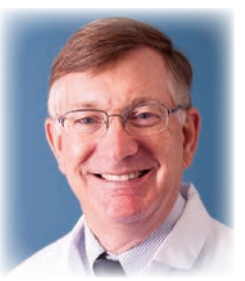

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JUMP over to Jump On In

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

The large, warehouse style building set just off of Willard Avenue looks isolated, save for the large sign reading "Jump On In." Stepping inside is a completely different experience.

Neon greens and bright blues are splashed on the walls as laughter and shouts of happiness can be heard from the next room over.

"Kids have a blast here," franchise owner Harpreet Bath said. "Once kids are here, they don't want to leave."

Bath and her co-owner, Seema Sabarad, opened the business Feb. 19 and said they have had a warm reception from the town since then.

"The town folks are already helping, which is so great," Bath said.

They have been friends for 10 years and this is their first business venture together.

"We're both from India and our husbands worked for the same company," Bath said of how the friendship began.

The women bonded over a shared love of children and in recent years began discussing what kind of business they could open that would best utilize that passion.

"We wanted to do something related to kids. When I was in India, I was a professor, and so I took care of those kids," Bath said with a small laugh. "They were a little bit older, but still we like taking care of them."

The two friends began researching possible business ventures that would allow them to work one on one with children on a daily basis. Initially, they thought

Zoe Young, 7, posed at the bottom of a giant inflatable slide.

Photos by Allie Rivera

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Ethan Young, 10, prepared to jump to a safe landing of foam and air during Jump On In's open hours.

about opening a place that would just have inflatables, such as bounce houses and giant slides, but their research showed that interest in those places was beginning to dwindle.

They wanted to offer something more.

"We had seen places like this and we wanted to do something different," Bath said.

"We thought, how can we put all this together so that each and every age can have fun together?"

– Harpreet Bath

This research led her and Sabarad to discover Jump On In, a national franchise with locations in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Texas that combines standard inflatables with a foam pit and obstacle course.

"This is the first Ninja Warrior course in Connecticut," Bath said.

Having these options allows for a greater age range of children to utilize the space.

"We wanted to have something for every age," Bath said. "We thought, how can we put all this together so that each and every age can have fun together?"

Since opening in February, she has seen people of all ages enjoying the space, including teenagers and young adults renting the business for private events. Those who visit call Jump On In a unique experience.

"We really like it. It's different and they have more features than other places like this," parent Abby Young said as her children ran around and played. "The obstacle course especially is different and gives them something else to do. Plus the price is great."

The Newington site of Jump On In is currently the only location in Connecticut, and although Bath and Sabarad are starting to think about plans for the future, they want to see how their first business does before making any decisions.

"We're making plans, but it's all step by step," Bath said.

The business offers open hours throughout the week, but according to Bath, they are mostly known for their private parties and events.

"Private parties are totally separate," she said.

The location lends itself to separate parties. Within the 10,000-square-foot space are two play areas, as well as two brightly painted party rooms, each equipped with a refrigerator and sink.

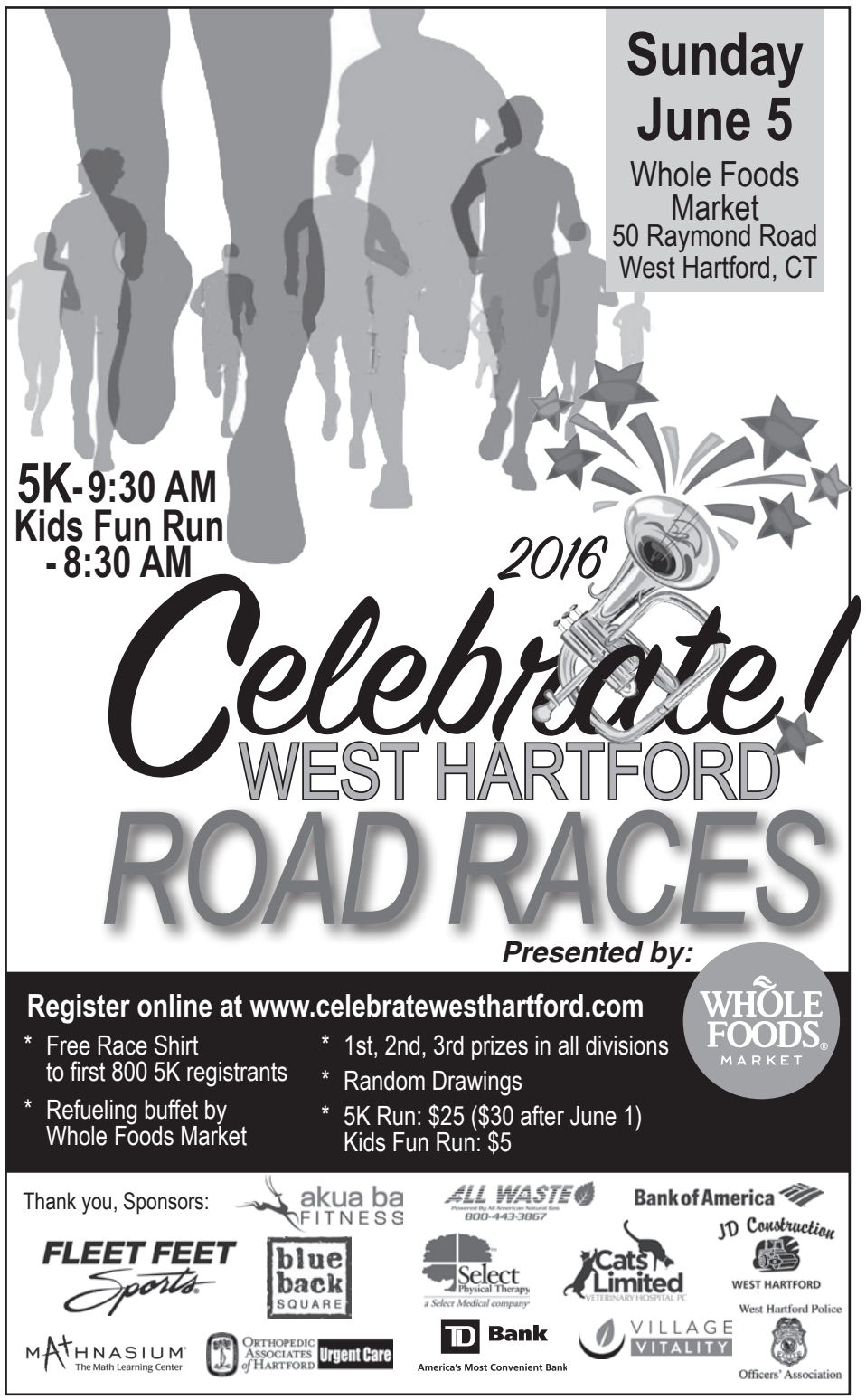
Safety is another primary concern, but the two women said there are at least two "referees" on hand at all times to make sure that all in attendance are playing safely.

"This is a safe place for kids and it's good exercise for them," Bath said. "Parents can relax here."

She added that the business will be adding new employees in the coming months due to the success they are already enjoying.

"We are really looking to serve the public. We want to provide a good facility for the kids." **NL**

Jump On In is located at 405 Alumni Road and can be reached at 860-436-3600. For more information visit jumponinfun.com/newington.



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Father and sons create a game app together

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

There are more than 1.5 million apps available on Apple products and more than 1.6 million for Android users. But when a local family didn't find a game that was exactly to their liking, they decided to take matters into their own hands.

"We wanted to make something kind of like an old-style shooter game from the '80s and '90s," Newington resident Steve Bogatz explained.

With the help of his sons Andrew, 15, and Jack, 11, Bogatz started Bo-Fro games, combining the first part of their last name with the signature hair style that they sport.

"Andrew's nickname is 'Fro' and Jack's friends now call him 'Baby Fro,'" Bogatz said with a small laugh.

As their first game, the family created "Apollo Intense!" It became available for Apple products in January of 2015 and Android this past December.

"It has that old-style feel to it," Bogatz said.

Though the game is now fully available both as a 99-cent purchase without ads or as a free version, the process to get there was not a simple one. He and his sons have been working on the game in some manner for nearly 10 years.

"When Andrew was very young, he loved video games," Bogatz said. "He would sit on my lap and we'd play Dr. Seuss and Putt Putt. When he was about 5 or 6, he said, 'Dad, could we ever do something like this?'"

It was at that moment that Bogatz began a new hobby. A social worker by day, he has a degree in computers from the University of Connecticut and considers game design a fun way to use different parts of his brain.

"I worked with computers for about a year and a half after I finished school, but I missed people," he said.

After hearing about his son's interest in creating a game, Bogatz began researching software that would allow him to build his ideal app. Through the next six or seven years, he used his free time to learn the intricacies of developing this kind of app and about three years ago he started working to create

Newington resident Steve Bogatz created a new game app for smartphones and tablets with the help of his sons Jack, 11, left, and Andrew, 15.

Photo by Allie Rivera

Apollo Intense!

"Andrew and his friends would give me really good feedback about what they wanted to see," he said.

When testing the game out, Andrew said that one main criteria he was looking for was something that would keep his interest.

"I didn't want it to be fun in the beginning but then get boring," he said. "I like it because I didn't really lose interest. It got more fun as I played it."

As Jack started to get older, he became more involved in the testing process as well.

"I gave him some ideas about Power Ups and stuff," Jack said.

"Their enthusiasm really motivated me," their father added.

"We keep trying to make it better and better," Bogatz said, thinking back to the challenges he faced at the beginning of the process. "I still remember the very first time that I got it from the computer screen onto the little iPod screen. I was jumping up and down." NL

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Writers, writers everywhere

Elementary schools host visit by children's authors

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Elementary school students across the district have learned life lessons about hard work and perseverance from the books they read in their classrooms. But in recent weeks they were able to hear those lessons directly from the books' authors.

Ruth Chaffee, Anna Reynolds, Elizabeth Green and John Paterson schools invited noted children's authors to visit and give speeches about their lives and published works to inspire the youngsters in their own reading and writing.

"Literacy is such an important part of what we do here and we have an opportunity to get our kids really excited about reading," Anna Reynolds Principal Jeremy Visone said. "When they meet the author and see how this regular person became a famous author, it's very inspirational."

The author visits are not a new event at any of the schools, but each year staff and faculty work to build excitement throughout the building.

"We've been preparing for months," Kate Tibbitts, library media specialist at Ruth Chaffee, said. "We've been getting the books into the classrooms and had kids vote on their favorite books. This is a big deal for us."

Ruth Chaffee has one of the longest-running author visit programs, having begun more than a decade ago.

Photos by Allie Rivera

Author Jacqueline Davies meets with students at Anna Reynolds School after her presentation. They are, clockwise from left, Davies, kindergartners David Genova, Alina Soler, RitaMarie Haeseler-Andrade and Brycen Hoang.

"We have it down to a science now," Reading Consultant Kim Garger said with a small laugh.

This year, the school brought in children's author and illustrator Brian Lies, whose works include the Bat series "Bats at the Beach," "Bats at the Ballgame" and "Bats in the Band."

The school began the planning process for his March 30 author visit this past October with help from the

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Parent Teacher Association. The PTA agreed to fund the event and purchase Lies's books for the classrooms.

During his visit, the author gave a presentation to each grade level and spoke about where he found the inspiration for his Bat book series.

"My ideas come from the same place that yours do," he told the pupils assembled in the school's library. "This book comes right from my experience at the beach. The world's alive with story ideas."

> **"I wrote stories for six years and got nothing but rejection letters."**
>
> **– Jacqueline Davies**

The book series began after his child pointed out that the shape of some frost on a window resembled a bat. Primarily an illustrator prior to the Bat books, Lies looked at the shape and began to draw it out.

Before long, the idea for "Bats at the Beach" came to him and he began working on a book.

"The whole thing started with this shape of ice on a window and a second-grader with a good imagination," he said.

During his presentation, Lies showed the students at Ruth Chaffee how he creates his drawings, typically making five or six versions before deciding upon one that he likes. He sketches his drawings in crayon before switching to paint to complete his artwork.

"In the brightest part, it probably has eight layers of paint," he said.

He took suggestions from the students for new Bat drawings he could create and completed rough sketches of some of those ideas on the spot, including one he called the Batue of Liberty.

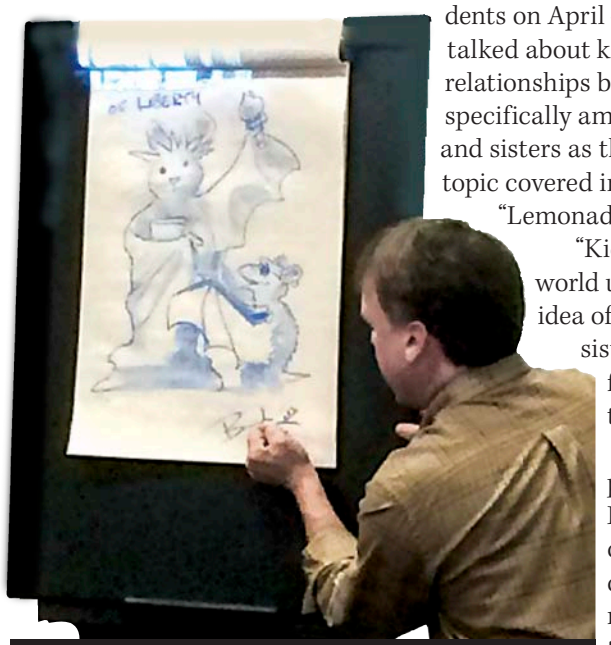
Preparations for the author event were just as extensive at Elizabeth Green School, where Connecticut author Alan Katz visited. His works include books of children's songs and poems such as "Take Me Out of the Bathtub and other silly dilly songs" and "Poems I Wrote When No One Was Looking," as well as his upcoming chapter book for kids, "The Day the Mustache Took Over."

Faculty prepared for the day throughout the school year, which Katz said helped to make his visit a positive one.

"I credit the set up that they did for the kids before my coming that led to them being so responsive," he said.

During his presentation, also on March 30, Katz discussed the wide styles of writing he has created over his career. In addition to his books of "Silly Dilly Songs," he has also written for television, including a long run on the Rosie O'Donnell Show, honors shows such as the Emmys, Tonys and Kids' Choice Awards, as well as for commercials and advertising.

Katz showed students a video of a commercial he wrote for I Can't Believe It's Not Butter that featured actress Megan Mullally singing to "Turn the Tub Around."



During his presentation at Ruth Chaffee School, author and illustrator Brian Lies created a sketch inspired by a student suggestion that he called the Batue of Liberty. Lies is the author of the Bat series of books.

"I believe that ideas are everywhere we look," Katz he told the small crowd gathered in the school library. "That's what I love about writing. We can all start at the same place and can go in different directions."

It was after those television writing experiences that his daughter suggested he begin writing for children, which led to his first "Silly Dilly Songs" book.

Katz stressed that while he encourages laughter and hopes students will write their own silly songs, writing should never be hurtful.

"I will never make a joke that hurts somebody's feelings," he said. "Making fun at somebody else's expense is not funny. Kindness comes first."

Anna Reynolds School hosted Jacqueline Davies, who has written for children of varying ages in her picture books such as "The Night is Singing," as well as her chapter books, including the "Lemonade War" series.

As she spoke to the students on April 4, Davies also talked about kindness and relationships between people, specifically among brothers and sisters as they grow up, a topic covered in the "Lemonade War" series.

"Kids all over the world understand the idea of brothers and sisters getting in fights," she told the students.

During her presentation, Davies discussed how her childhood experiences shaped the writer that she would become. As a child, she and her siblings and friends would play outside and make up games.

"We would ask a simple but powerful question – what if?" she said. "Before I even knew my alphabet, I was starting to become a writer because I was making up these stories."

Once she learned how to write, she continued making stories and did so throughout

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elementary, middle and high school. She then decided to attend college to study writing as well, but while doing so, she lost something important.

"A pen?" one student asked.

"A notebook?" asked another.

"No," Davies said. "In college, I lost my confidence."

Being in an advanced writing program, she was surrounded by talented and dedicated writers. But instead of being inspired by their work, she became discouraged about her own.

"I decided right then and there that I wasn't good enough and I never would be," she said.

It wasn't until years later that Davies decided to give writing another chance, this time writing for children instead of adults and with a regained sense of self.

"I wrote my first book and sent it out to 30 publishers and I got 30 rejections," she said. "I wrote stories for six years and got nothing but rejection letters."

That idea of perseverance was a common theme throughout all three author presentations and the primary lesson that authors and faculty alike said they hoped students would take with them.

"A lot of kids just assume you get to be an adult and you are what you are, but it's not that simple," Visone said. "Rejection is part of the process. Kids see that she [Davies] didn't just have this natural ability to be a writer, she had to work at her craft."

Similarly, Lies shared how his drawings have changed for the better over years of practice by bringing in a piece of artwork he created in elementary school.

"I wasn't the best artist as a kid," he said, holding up both his childhood drawing and a recent painting from the Bat series. "These are both done by the same person, the only different is practice."

Katz brought in his third grade report card from his elementary school in Queens, New York.

"'Alan must move toward expressing his written ideas more creatively,'" he read aloud from the report card with a small laugh. "I knew I wanted to be a writer, so I wanted to prove to Mrs. Ballowitz that I could do it."

For Lies, being able to speak to the students across the country, including at Ruth Chaffee, felt like an important cyclical step.

"I am an author and illustrator now because of an author and illustrator who came to my school when I was young," Lies said. "That was the first time it dawned on me that books were made by mere mortals. My hope is that maybe I can get kids to think, 'I want to do X, and maybe I can.'"

Though Katz said he was thrilled to be able to speak with the students, he feels that his work is no more important than the work of the teachers who interact with them every day.

"There's nothing I do that the teachers don't do on a daily basis. Somehow hearing it from someone who has published or from a different perspective helps it get through," he said.

"If what I do unlocks that 'Hey, I'm a writer' thought in one kid's head, then it's worth it, and I love that."

Davies agreed that inspiring children to be active readers and writers is the best part of her job and what makes doing author visits such as the one at Anna Reynolds such an important activity.

"My number-one goal is to get the kids to say, 'I'm excited to read this book,' even if it's not my book, or 'I can't wait to start writing this story,'" she said. "These are our readers of tomorrow."

"It's so meaningful to have events like these," Elizabeth Green Instructional Coach Brenda Dzwil said. "You never know if you could be inspiring a future author." **NL**

Following his presentation, author and illustrator Brian Lies signed copies of his books for students, including second-grader Caroline Fisher, 8.

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Happy anniversary

The Hartford Saengerbund celebrated its 158th anniversary the evening of March 19. The German-American singing society started out on Park Street in Hartford and moved to Newington in the 1960s. Coming up this summer is its biennial Bierfest, scheduled for the weekend of Aug. 26-28.

Club members Bob Ludwig, Ron Madeia and Dennis Herner were named honorary members in recognition of their longevity and years of hard work on behalf of HSB. This is the highest honor bestowed by the club.

Hans Weiss, at 66 years the longest-tenured member, at 66 years, dances with his wife, Lotte.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Mayor Roy Zartarian and his companion Dr. Kathleen Marie Clark are welcomed with a traditional "Ein Prosit" toast by Eric Hartleb of Newington. Looking on are club President Amy Swank and Musical Director Richard Clarke.

President Amy Swank and her husband, former president Phil Swank, welcome Mayor Roy Zartarian and Dr. Kathleen Marie Clark to the formal occasion.

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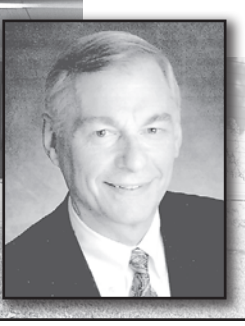

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Fixing the skin

Dory Redman creates handmade bath and body products

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Small tin jars were displayed on the table before Dory Redman, lined up along handcrafted wooden shelves. Each tin was labeled with a circular white sticker indicating a portion of its contents: lemon sherbet, cooling mint, blood orange, peach Bellini.

They sounded like delicious concoctions, but the contents inside serve a different purpose. In the Buff by Dory is Redman's side business of natural bath and body products that she has owned for three years.

"You want to take care of your skin the best you can," she said with a smile. "You have it forever."

By day, Redman serves as "the entire wire department" at a bank, but her work with In the Buff by Dory is where her life finds special meaning.

"This is what I love to do. This is my passion," she said.

A mother of two, Redman said the

Photos by Allie Rivera

Dory Redman, owner of In the Buff by Dory, creates homemade bath and body products. Her business brings her as much joy as her customers.

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business began when she wanted to create special gifts for her children's teachers.

"I decided to make scrubs for everybody," she said. "I found a recipe and I just played around with it until I made it my own."

The first product she created was an amaretto bath scrub. After gifting it to her children's teachers in Newington, she immediately got a positive response. A friend at her bank job began encouraging her to create more, but Redman was uncertain.

"At first, I just said I don't know and I'm not sure, but then I started playing around some," she said.

She quickly found that creating these products was not only a potential business venture but also a way for her to unwind and enjoy herself.

"It's my Zen. It's my time to relax and experiment and have fun," she said. "I like figuring out new things."

In the Buff by Dory products include homemade bath salts, body scrubs and lip balms, among others. Owner Dory Redman said creating the products is the fun part.

She started creating homemade body scrubs and bath salts and by June 2013 she was hosting a table at the Newington Farmers' Market.

Since then, Redman has expanded her line of products to include lip balms, lotion bars, nursing balms and a healing balm she calls Improve the Wreckage that she recently submitted to Burt's Bees for a grant.

"It fixes skin problems, scars, cracked knuckles," she said. "You use this for a couple of days and it will completely change your skin."

Her Improve the Wreckage balm is an especially popular product and has been used by boxers and athletes to repair damaged knuckles.

"Dory isn't trying to take advantage. She's really creating these great products to help people," Deanna Reney, owner of Karma's Closet consignment on the Berlin Turnpike, said.

Her store is one of five that sells In the Buff by Dory products. Redman recalled seeing the young friend of one of her children with dry, cracked hands and she insisted on giving some of her healing balm to him and his parents.

"That breaks my heart when I see that because it hurts," she said. "I like that I can do that for somebody and I want to make it so that everybody can use it."

Making her products safe and effective was a driving force behind

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all of her creations.

"I have super-sensitive skin, so if it works for me, it will work for anyone," Redman said. "All of my scrubs are sugar based because it's better for your skin. It doesn't dry it out like a salt-based one would."

The ingredients for all In the Buff by Dory products, which include coconut oil and Shea butter, are locally sourced, a fact she said is important to her as a local business owner.

"I'm a part of the Nutmeg Collective," she explained. "It's a group of Connecticut artisans that provides resources to each other."

In addition to selling her products online, in select stores and at farmers' markets, Redman also sells her products for events such as bridal and baby showers.

"I love doing showers because you get to know people by seeing what they choose," she said.

In addition to selling Redman's products in her store, Reney is also a client.

"Dory did scrubs for my cousin's baby shower last year and for my sister's wedding we're going to do lotion bars and the lip balm," she said. "She does custom labels, too, and it makes it really special."

One larger event for which Redman created products brought her some national attention. She has spent time volunteering for the Connecticut Children's Miracle Network and at one event she had the opportunity to meet Lori-Ann Marchese, who held the title of Mrs. Connecticut America in 2013.

"She was wonderful and it all just happened so quickly," Redman said.

"It's my Zen. It's my time to relax and experiment and have fun."

– Dory Redman

Marchese took an interest in Redman's products and decided to include some of them in gift bags she gave out to the other 50 contestants in the pageant. She was later featured on the Bravo television show "Game of Crowns" and she brought Redman with her to the premiere.

Despite the attention she received from this, Redman is happy to remain a small, local businesswoman who operates out of her house.

She would prefer to expand the products that she creates rather than the business itself.

"I hand make every single thing I do," she said. "It's the way I make sure all the product is the same every single time."

Her busiest times are December and June, so each January is her designated time to experiment with new creations.

"January I have as product development month," she said. "The lotion bar took me a good seven or eight tries to get it the way I want it. It's like an experiment trying to make it work."

She is creating a line for men which she hopes to have available in time for Father's Day. Through her business, Redman hopes she can enable people to take better care of themselves, even if it is through small steps.

"Everyone deserves to take a little time for themselves, especially us moms," she said. "A lot of times we don't get to do a little something for ourselves, and I think that's important, even if it's just two extra minutes in the shower." **NL**

In the Buff by Dory is available online at inthebuffbydory.com.

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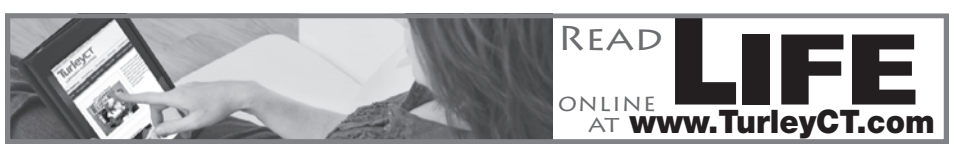

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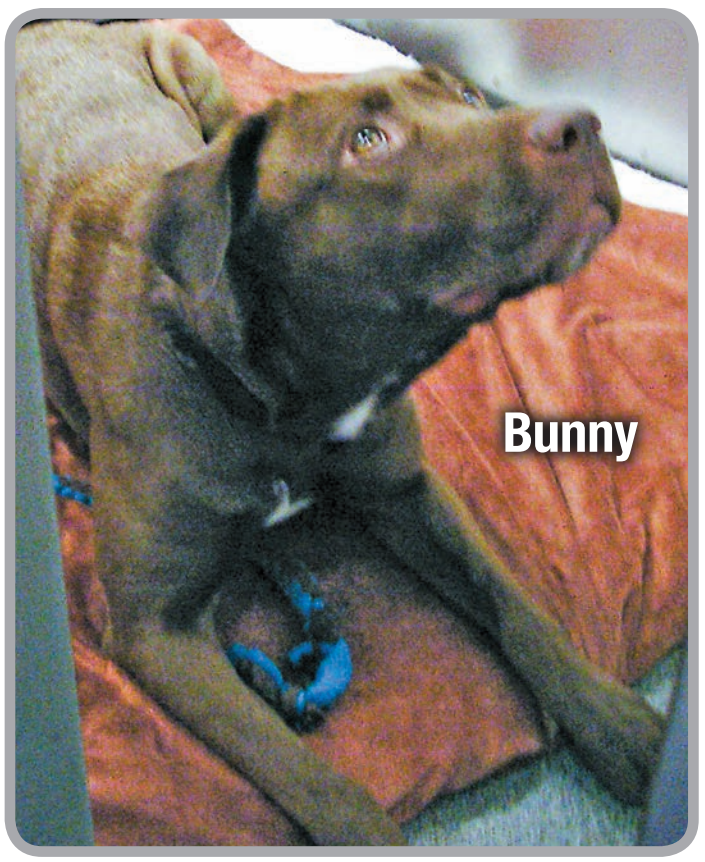

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Jasper is a male domestic shorthair. He's 7 years old and friendly. He can handle other animals in his new home, but is shy with people at first.

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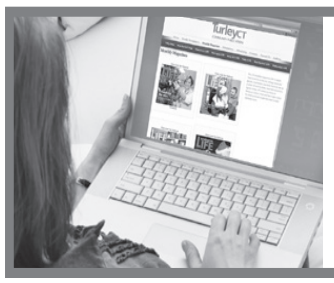
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Meet Cece Borjeson

Folk music is her true passion in life

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Music is more than just a means of expression for Cece Borjeson. It is the door to new friends, experiences, places and ways to touch other people's souls.

"If we can make them laugh or cry, then we're doing something right," she likes to say.

Borjeson enjoys public performance, often accompanied by her friend Ruth George. Folk music is her forte but she also plays Celtic, standards, swing, blues and classic Americana.

In 2010, the Newington resident of 30 years retired from a professional career working as traffic and services manager for a trade show exhibit company, giving her more time to focus on the music that has been a part of her life to varying degrees for its entirety.

For the past 20 years she has performed solo, as a duo with George, and with other groups including the Birch Creek Band, Cotton Hollow Rising, Allendale Trio and Nina & the Rumblings. She recorded and released four CDs produced by her husband, Terry, between 1998 and 2006.

"We've been a duo for many, many years. She's always there for people," George said. "As a musician, she's an amazing harmonist. She can play with anybody."

She enjoys the traditional folk music they play.

"It's a lot of fun playing together," George said. "We usually end up having an incredible blast."

She added that many of the concerts are spontaneous and every audience is different. George sings and plays the guitar.

Borjeson, 65, has spent a week every summer since 1997 at summer camp, officially called the Summer Acoustic Music Week, in Lake Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire. It was there where she first learned to play the claw hammer style of banjo from Lorraine Hammond.

Musicians from all over the country attend this week of music. She has taken classes in such areas as blues harp, blues history, song writing, voice, performance, clog dancing, folk ensemble, guitar and others.

She was 14 years old in 1964 during the folk revival and many years later wrote a tribute to her father George McLaughlin called "White Collar Cowboy."

He was an aerospace engineer at Kaman Aircraft and had employee access to the Ovation "seconds" shop. He bought his daughter a one-of-a-kind guitar, a prototype Contemporary Classic that never went into production.

It cost him $100. The guitar is worth many times more than that now. Today, Borjeson plays more banjo than guitar, calling herself a "banjo girl."

She performed from 1964 through 1971 at small coffeehouses and open mics in the Hartford area. When she met her future husband, she put music aside to participate in team sports leagues – she ran the Hartford Women's Softball League for many years – and pursue an interest in flower gardening.

Twenty-five years later, Borjeson was reorganizing the house and came across that old Ovation guitar, its case covered in dust. She decided to either sell it to someone who could appreciate it or learn to play again.

She spent a few months playing in the kitchen

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and the garden, but wanted to branch out. Her first open mic was at Sweet Gatherings in Old Wethersfield and she met other musicians who would become her inspiration, friends and supporters for the past 20 years.

As it turned out, rediscovering music was not unique at all. She was one of many empty nesters who were finding their way back to the music scene they enjoyed as youngsters.

Her latest focus is a blues retrospective. She's also doing a lot with the Portable Folk Festival, a collection of bands and solo artists who play together frequently but only do one official concert a year. It's always a benefit for a worthy cause.

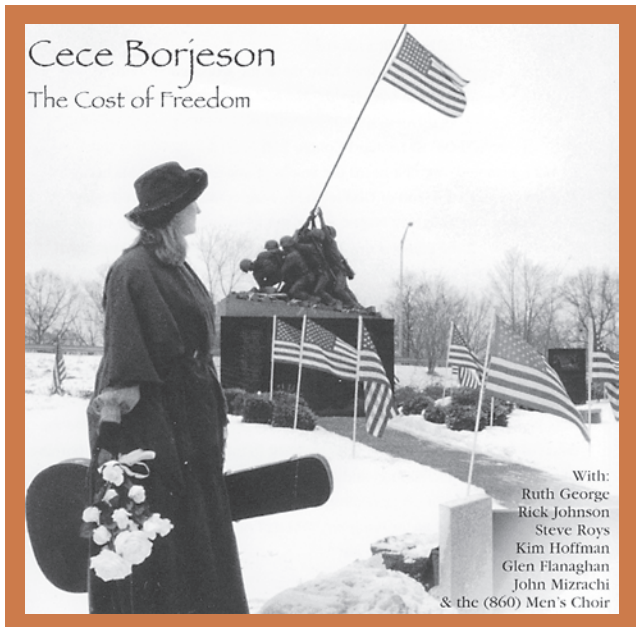
This is a woman who thrives on an audience.

"You go in a lot of directions or you get bored. I get really bored playing to myself," she said.

Borjeson finds that music helps keep her grounded. The Portables, as she calls them, meet at each other's homes and play everything from folk to gospel to spirituals.

"We're learning so much new music now," she said. "Performance is so much fun. What happens between the songs is what makes it special," she said.

She speaks fondly of the late Gil Dube, a dear friend and fellow musician. He developed dementia and had to move into a convalescent home. Borjeson and others organized a regular song circle in the facility's dining room so that



"Performance is so much fun. What happens between the songs is what makes it special."

– Cece Borjeson

he could enjoy regular visits and music with his old friends.

"Gil, even when he was in the Alzheimer's ward, would sit in the circle and play harmonica," she said.

The song circles became so popular that even after his death the musicians decided to continue the Gil Dube Pickin' Party for the benefit of those living in that facility. They play there every two months or so.

Borjeson's life in music continues to provide her with wonderful connections and experiences. She reflected upon what has happened thus far.

"It's just been amazing. I've got hundreds of new friends from all over the country," she said. "People help each other, it's not competitive. We'll do anything for a laugh."

Borjeson also enjoys playing as a side musician and has picked up skills on the harmonica, penny whistle, kazoo, Irish frame drum and other percussion instruments. Her four cats seem to enjoy most of her music, but don't particularly like the sharp shrill of the penny whistle.

Her more recent venture of the claw hammer technique, in which the player strikes the strings of the banjo with a claw-like hand, is much different than picking the strings with the fingertips and is easier on her arthritis.

"I'll be gong back to camp for some more banjo instruction this summer," she said. **NL**

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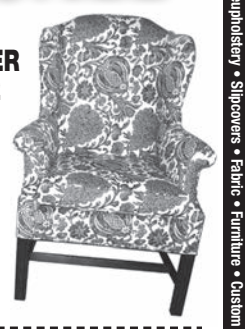

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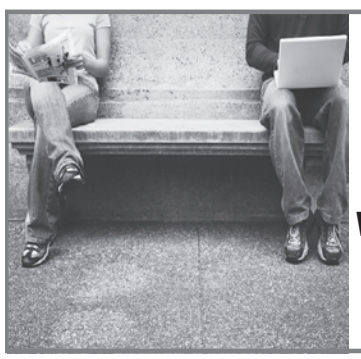

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The children put on sunglasses and their best hip-hop attitude for the song "Bucket Filling Rap."

Ruth Chaffee kindergartners take the stage

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The youngest students at Ruth Chaffee School are already experiencing what it's like to perform in front of an audience.

The school recently presented its annual kindergarten musical to audiences at both Ruth Chaffee and the Newington Senior & Disabled Center. In total, the kindergartners presented three performances.

"Peace, Love and Bucket Filling" was conceived and written by music teacher Marc Balling and his wife, school social worker Rachel West-Balling.

"Bucket filling" comes from the book "Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?" and is a term used throughout the school district that encourages children to think about the importance of being kind to others. The district is also incorporating yoga and mindfulness.

"This is the second time we collaborated on a kindergarten musical. The kindergarten musical tradition started a good 20 years ago," West-Balling said. "An awesome thing about this musical is you've got 65 kindergartners teaching the whole school. All four elementary schools use the concept of bucket filling."

The plan was to combine music with learning social and emotional skills. Her husband explained that the Common Core curriculum includes students performing, presenting and showing what they have learned to others.

"Giving them exposure about being on stage and performing in public gives them confidence. One of our songs is called the 'Bucket Filling Rap.' We had an overall message of trying to stay positive," Balling said. "It's very empowering for them. Kids retain [knowledge] much better if they learn the topic through multiple mediums. We started learning the songs in October."

His wife added that this confidence also grows from learning a series of steps and successfully following directions.

"We feel that they're going to have much stronger learning skills through the arts and music," she said.

The musical included several songs written by Balling, as well as Louis Prima, John Lennon and Eric Idle of "Monty Python's Flying Circus" fame. He rewrote some popular songs to fit the play's theme.

Two principals were among the performers – Ruth Chaffee's own Beverly Lawrence and Michael Gaydos from John Paterson School. Tutors Erin Gilbert, Kim Neumann, Ambreen Saeed, Amelia Sollima and Erin Wardwell assisted backstage and in other capacities.

Kindergarten teachers, from left, Sonya Casarotto, Pati McAndrew and Mallory Violette played key roles in the production.

School social worker Rachel West-Balling and her husband, music teacher Marc Balling, collaborated on a kindergarten musical at Ruth Chaffee School.

Art teacher Melissa Gajda created the banner for the stage. West-Balling and kindergarten teachers Mallory Violette, Pati McAndrew and Sonya Casarotto pitched in, along with the parents.

Casarotto took charge of the costuming, set design and leading the children through all of the songs and corresponding movements. McAndrew and Violette helped in numerous ways.

West-Balling was impressed that such young children could maintain their focus on stage for an entire hour. **NL**

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Making the grade

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Grade 10

Dominika Adamczyk, Benjamin Arora, Syed Asar, Gynno Bacaoco, Grace Bielesz, Gavin Bissoni, Jessica Buslewicz, Grace Cala, Ashley Cayo, Al Chan, Diana Coleman, Prachi Dave, Tuuyen Dinh, Justin Field, Alexa Freitas, Caitlin Gray, Victoria Hathaway, Sashesa Haughton, Brendan Henriques, Lukas Houle, Tram Huynh, Emma Johnson, Emily Karanian, Edward Lund, Madelyn Mangiafico, Khang Nguyen, Claudia Padykula, Brian Pizzoferrato, Elizabeth Richmond, Yasmin Rincon, Monica Sadil, Carly Saindon, Rylie Shaw, Pema Sherpa, Justine Strom, Kenneth Swanson, Kiana Tan, Jasmine Tran, Mindy Tran, Jason Vereneau, Jose Rene Villano, Skylar Voorhies, William Walsh, Julia Wnuk, Angelina Zacharias and Kevin Zvonarek.

Grade 11

Stephanie Akosa, Michael Allo, James Ancona, Katelyn Andrews, Megan Andrews, Emily Austin, Kacey Blais Lauren Brooks, Rei Bufi, Abigail Cabral, Jacqueline Callaghan, Patrick Callahan, Ryan Cappellucci, Austin Caracciolo, Emily Carle, Monica Chabros, Shelbin Cheriyan, Robert Ciaffaglione, Mitchell Coia, Tyler Coleman, Vinh Dau , Iryna Demyanova, Gabriela Disla Suarez, Thomas Doyle, Symantha Fazzino, Jillian Forauer, Ryan Grande, Karli Hellman, Alexandra Hernandez, Mallory Jackson, Ariya Jacob, Ayana Jacob, Yash Jinwala, Courtney Kamansky, Nisa Khandoker, Benjamin Labas, Katerina Lagace, Jalanie Lawrence, Kenneth Luna, Maria MacNeill, Allison Madrazo, Lindsey Mangiafico, Neve Manion, Danielle Marino, Teodora Markova, Jason Marques, Jacqueline Minor, Cassandra Moree, Brianna Nedjoika, Tam Nguyen, Nathaniel Page, Anthony Palaia, Catherine Parafati, Alexis Pestrichello, Natalie Remiszewski, Jeremy Rippel, Emily Robinson, Corinda Sanford, Tiffany Santos, Austin Sargent, Tyler Savluk, Charlottle Shepherd, Christopher Silva, Victoria Skonieczny, Nicole Sliwinski, Kaito Smith, Alexander Stolarczyk, Madison Suchocki, Roselyn Terrazos-Moreno, Jennifer Tougas, Joanna Tran, Maxwell Turgeon, Daniel Vala, Elaina Vass, Jessica Veilleux , Kira Venables, Oksana Veres, Michael Vesci, Benjamin Weyman and David Winslow.

Grade 12

Ron Abraham, Emily Andrzejewski, Samantha Arasimowicz, Syed Asar, Clara Bartlett, Rebecca Bernardo, Caroline Bielaszka,Connor Buckley, Madeline Rose Camalig, Jennifer Casparino, Aeisha Cirunay, Erica Condon, Victoria Cornell, Mia Dulay, Valerie Dunsing, Sarah Ericson, Eric Evon, Cameron Fedina, Cheyenne Fletcher, Shaylynn Frazon, Amanda Gagnon, Hayley Gilchrest, Isabella Gorski, Taylor Green, Brianna Huebner, Sawera Hussan, Isha Jinwala, Maryjane Johnson, Richard Junquera, Taimoor Khan, Darien Kupec, Kayla LaRosa, Deanna LaVoie, Kaila Lozada, Mackenzie Luiz, Blake Mamaclay, Karen Martinez, Austin Matteson, Jordan Mendelsohn, Haylee Morgan, Raymond Neistat, Kimberly Nguyen, Rebecca Nisotis, Renata Pastuszak, Prachi Patel, Tanvi Patel, Angela Petano, Douglas Phan, Jessica Reyor, Grace Rizzuto, Victoria Ruskys, Diana Salcedo, Nicole Saucier, Kiera Sheehan, Olesya Shturypita, Hannah Silverwatch, Brianna Simonetti, Johnny Sit, Nikki Truong, Anna Waldzinska, Carly Wanner-Hyde, McKayla Wyble, Dorian Zawisza and Victoria Zysk.

Honors

Grade 9

Baha Alsaqri, Christia Alvizo, Allison Amaya, Andrew Barresi, Azya Bass, Tatiana Bibraut, Jordan Brunetti, Simao Cabral, Anthony Carlson, Jack Chomko, Erika Cuevas, Matthew Dano, Sean Davis, Anthony DeBlasio, John DeGirolamo, Hannah Drew, Matthew Duffy, Kristin Florek, Abygale Flores, Theodore Fravel, Maya Gajowiak, Rebecca Goldstein, Vidhyut Gurrala, Alexander Haaser, Janize Hernandez, Julia Holland, Ethan Johnson, Lauren Johnson, Tyler Joseffy, Patrick Juvenico, John Kelley, Alyssa Kempesta, Taylor Kilduff, Samantha Lentini, Collin Liedke, Abigail Lyons, Christian Maldonado, Sophia Maselli, Julia Mazur, Jillian McCormick, Rashell Mezquia, Feduk MIrza, Izabela Moczydlowski, Jordi Morel, Tiasia Morton, Patrick Muczko, Vanessa Nardi, Holly Normandeau, Manew Nowshad, Joseph Olandt, Joseph Oliva, Ryan Peruta, Emily Petronio, Joshua Picklesimer, Katrina Porter, Cheyana Rose Porter-Rizza, Vanessa Quaranta, Kristina Ramsaroop, Victoria Savluk, Jack Scanlon, Audrey Schuler, Navesa Seguro, Ryan Sharp, Diana Shumski, Austin Silva, Grace Smedberg, Emily Sousa, Robert Stabert, Erin Stenvall, Matthew Tanguay, Aaliyah Taylor, Leah Tofeldt, Aiden Toth, Lauren Tougas, Talisa Vazquez, Rachel Veilleux, Andrew Vesci, Carli Weeden and Justin Youmans.

Grade 10

Ashley Arborio, Ashley Ault, Rima Babu, Riya Babu, Iris Barents, Matthew Barron, Chloe Bilodeau, Patrick Boucher, Abigail Bourgoin, Connor Brennan, Hallie Chiarito, Olivia Colon, Tayena Colon, Skylar Couillard, Spencer Couillard, Jorge Cruz, Kiley Davies, Sabrina Denault, John Dietter, Matthew Dinooe, Gabriella Florio, Aveontae Frazier, Colin Freeman, Jared Galarza, William Gardner, Cassidy Girolano, Ashley Gospodarczyk, Valerie Guerrette, Vivian Ho, Kiana Hooper, Sruthi Iyer, Cooper Johnson, Mateusz Kaczynski, Jacob Knowlton, Stephanie Kubish, Antonia Laites, Jay LaRosa, Daniel Lasota, Jillian Lavery, Henry Levinson, David Magsayo, Kimberly Marasigan, Alissa Matoy, Evan Metzger, Zachary Miller, Ryan Murphy, Robert Nagy, Ashley Nogareda, Daniel O'Brien, Alyssa Oja, Dominic Palaia, Luke Pappalardo, Danielle Parrotte, Anami Patel, Jonathan Perez, Robert Petronio, Kayli Peyton, Jessica Pierzchalski, Cole Pratte, Giovanna Rivera, Michael Shooshan, Erik St. Pierre, Sarah Stepak, Damon Stewart, Riley Tehan, Lauren Theriault, Abel Thomas, Pernezha Veal, Blayne Wanner-Hyde and Olivia Wronka.

Grade 11

Hannah Aforismo, Andrew Alekseiko, Brian Baglan, Britney Bazzano, Natalie Bellettiere, Kevin Bibraut, Caitlyn Bloduc, Arayana Bracken, Angela Breault, McKayla Burgos, Samantha Burnett, Abigail Buslewicz, Matthew Cassone, Bahar Celikis, Zachary Correll, Michael Dano, Yanelly Del Valle, Kinsey DelBuono, Brandon Delgado, Gabriella DeRiu, Briana DeSouza, Michelle Duong, Justin Durocher, Lindsey Fairbank, Aleksandra Fiedziulkiewicz, Emma Gagnon, Marissa Garbiel, Gage Garcia, Luke Gilchrest, Austin Gillis, Andrea Hall, Journee Hawley, Matthew Hawley, Noah Hedberg, Mariester Jara, Justin Kalisz, Ariel Keen, Rebecca Klett, Matthew Lallier, Brittney Lenzi, Asia Leonard, Cailey Lopes, Nicole Maldonado, Jordan Margarido, Bruno Marques, Madison Marques, Ahmer Masood, Nicole Masse, Denny Mathew, Alexis Mercado, Jacob Mermelstein, Dalia Murillo, Wesley Murillo, Abrial Murray, Brittany Nedjoika, Alex Nizielski, Samantha Nunes, Melanie Pantano, Manav Patel, Lauren Petrozza, Megan Piatkowski, Diana Pinho, Aliyah Pirulli, Jonathan Plavcan, Edgar Polanco, Brenna Pratte, Alyssa Reis, Mallory Rich, Alexa Rinaldi, Lauren Rioux, Matthew Roberts, Ananicole Rumley, Victoria Salvatore, Abru Santhosh, Zachary Saunders, Elina Shahmarova, Taylor Sharp, Cameron Shaw, Nickolas Sherman, Jonathan Soler, Brandon Spada, Joseph Taber, Joey Terranova, Makaiyah Thompson, Michelle Truong, Christian Twano, Emma Valade, Julianna Vass, Theresa Visconti, Jada Walker, Karlene Welles and Bailey Womack.

Grade 12

Mahdi Atittya, Zachary Angelillo, Joelene Antonie, Vasco Augusto, Alana Barkman, Jessica Baruffi, Alyssa Bellizzi, Corryne Birchall, Elias Bitzarakis, Alexandrea Blanchflower, Ryan Bollacker, Jordan Brazalovich, Bridget Cocheo, Luis Cruz, Matthew DelBuono, Maxwell Dietter, Luca DiPaola, Amanda Famiglietti, Anthony Gangi, Grant Ganley, Natalie Harackiewicz, Michael Januszczyk, Kyle Johnson, Jakub Karpiej, Stephen Keltonic, Alexnader Kemp, Marta Kempisty, Adam LaBella, Alexa Lazarowski, Tyler LeClair, Hayley Lemay, Kiah Levin, Olivia Maldonado, Gabriella Mamet, Beatriz Martins, Jordan Massini, Darin Mathew, Bryena Medina, Rhyanna Mehan, Joseph Montano, Klea Muharemi, Michaela Murray, Casey Nash, Lenny Ogando, Michelle Palys, Emily Pare, Olivia P:atoka, Kyle Pierson, Adam Porell, Brendan Pyzik, LeAndra Reid, Gabriel Reyes, Makenna Rich, Nikolas Rojek, Chyanne Roman, Rachel Rossignol, Elizabeth Christine Santic, Johnpaolo Signorello, Kayla Snyder, Yashvi Solanki, Michael Strong, Marek Targonski, Zachary Tinkham, Zackory Trommer, Victoria Usmanova, Brianna Viruet, Charlie Watts, Chance Wetmore, Evan Wetmore, Megabn Willgoos. Zoey SWilliams, Tessa SWoods and Peter Wroblewski.

Student of the Month

Teachers praise him as calm and mature

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Adam Alexander, 9, a fourth-grade student at Elizabeth Green School, is recognized by his teachers and other school staff for his maturity and compassion toward others.

Photo by Allie Rivera

Nine-year-old Adam Alexander walked with the steady footsteps of someone three times his age as he proceeded down the halls of Elizabeth Green School. Stopping before Principal James Marciano, the fourth-grader stretched out his arm for a firm handshake.

"He's a very calm and mature young man," Marciano said. "You can just see it in the way he carries himself."

Adam took time to carefully think about his words, remaining composed as he sat in a chair in Marciano's office.

"I like trying to be a role model," he said. "To me, it's important to try to help people."

One way that Adam used his voice to help people was when he recently spoke at a Town Council meeting to discuss the education budget, an issue about which he is passionate.

"I spoke about why they should keep education up and what I've learned this year. I also talked about the Chromebooks and why they're important," he said. "It would be really bad if the education budget goes down."

Marciano said he and other staff members were impressed with both Adam's willingness to speak in such an environment and his ability to deliver his message in such a manner.

"He has the confidence to speak in front of all those people," the principal said. "He's passionate about the things that matter to him."

Adam tries to find ways to take what he has learned and apply it to everyday life.

His two favorite subjects are math and science and he especially enjoys the experiments his class completes. Recently, they learned about forces in motion by creating vehicles out of K'Nex toys.

"We're learning about how weight affects movement," he explained.

In addition to his classroom studies, Adam is also part of the school's Explore program for gifted students, where he has the opportunity for advanced exploration.

One recent project allowed students to complete research on a chosen topic. After deliberating between two of his idols, Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, Adam decided to study Einstein because of a few interesting facts he learned.

"He didn't like to ever wear socks. I can't get over that fact," he said, slowly shaking his head with a small smile. "Also, he never learned how to drive a car, so he always rode his bike everywhere."

Adam's love of learning has also earned him a spot as one of the school's "techsperts."

"They basically take the lead on some of the new technology in the school," Marciano explained.

One such piece of technology Adam worked on was called Breakout EDU, a classroom escape game that uses educational components and teamwork to have students "hack" into a box and which is now used more widely throughout the school.

"We started off with some clues and we had to work together to complete the puzzle," Adam said.

The fourth grader was able to discuss that and other techspert experiences during an open house this year that showcased new ways technology is being used within the classroom.

"We made a project about energy and we got to show how we researched it and what the end product looked like," Adam said.

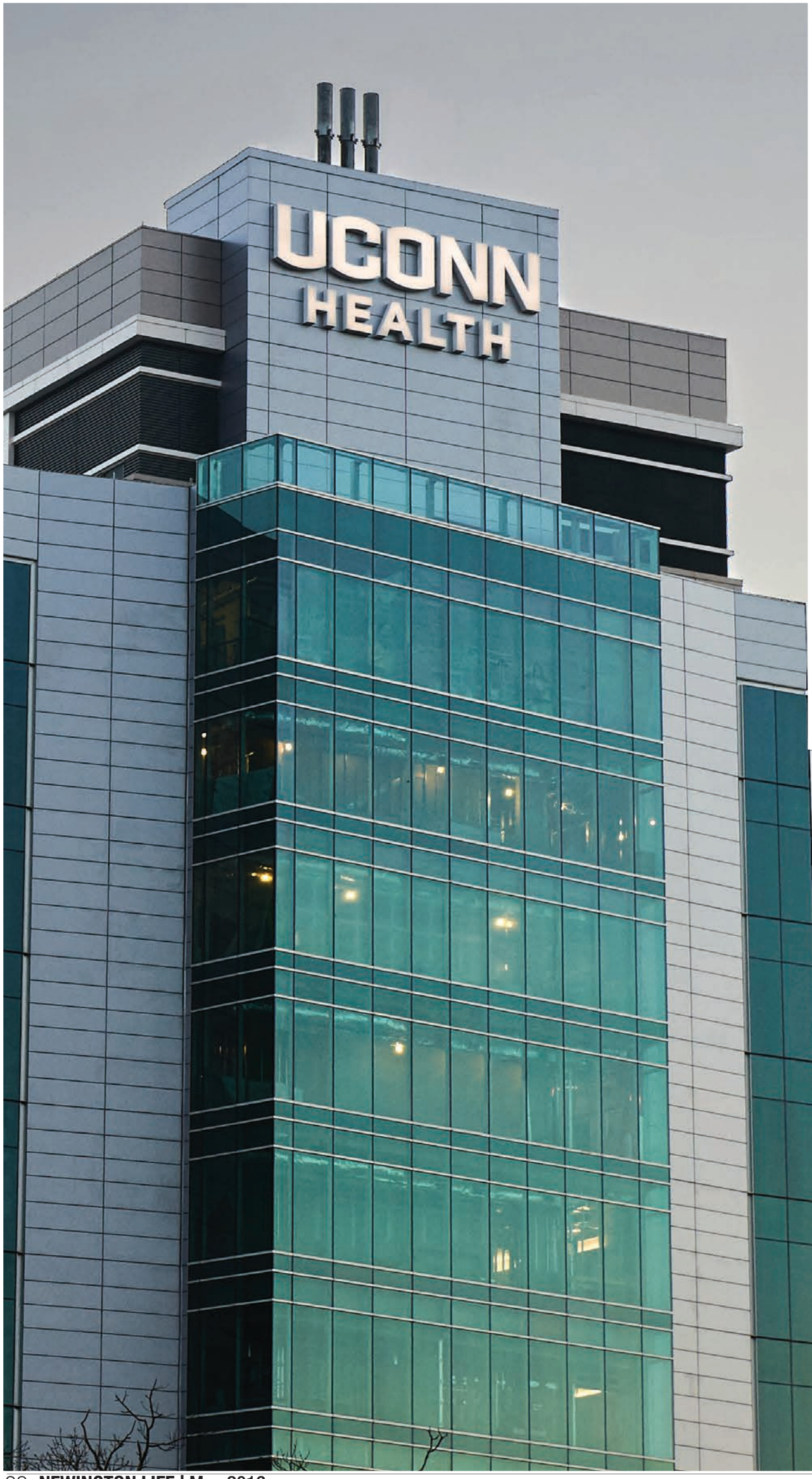
In addition to speaking in front of crowds, he has also had the opportunity this year to perform as a member of both the school chorus and band, where he plays the clarinet. Adam sang in the December choral concert and was one of a small ensemble of instrumentalists chosen to play at the event as well.

Staying physically active is also an important part of his life. He has participated in Unified Sports since kindergarten and hopes to continue this at the middle school level.

"We get to be buddies with special needs kids and do sports activities," he said. "At first I signed up because my brother was doing it, but I like helping kids that need help to do fun things that they can't always experience by themselves."

Adam said he was heavily influenced by his older brother, Ryan, 12, and he is looking forward to supporting Ryan this year as he competes in the Special Olympics for basketball and skiing.

Sports are important to the entire family; Adam plays soccer and baseball. He has played soccer since



"He's passionate about the things that matter to him."

– Principal James Marciano

age 3 and currently competes on both the town team and a premiere team.

His favorite sport is baseball. The Boston Red Sox fan has played since he was 4 years old and his favorite positions are pitcher and center field.

"I like baseball because it's not timed so it can go on for longer periods of time," he said. "I also like that it's separated into fielding and hitting."

When not playing on one of those teams, Adam also enjoys basketball and tennis, as well as skiing and snowboarding in the winter.

Marciano said Adam's long list of activities and commitment to his school work are admirable, but it is his kindness toward others that sets him apart.

"He truly cares about other people," Marciano said. "He is always looking out for others." **NL**

A home for all people

Temple Sinai celebrates 60 years of spirit and worship

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

The founding of Temple Sinai was a low-key affair. On Jan. 19, 1956, 15 families got together at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Sydney Horowitz to start a new Reform Jewish congregation.

Despite the lack of a building, a rabbi and the other trappings of a typical synagogue, the group was determined to succeed.

They originally met in each other's homes. Next came meetings at the town's Congregational and Lutheran churches, which they did from February 1956 through Sept. 17, 1960, according to a history prepared by Maxanne Kass, Temple Sinai's historian.

Services were led by guest rabbis and student rabbis. The congregation was aided by Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman and the board and members of Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford.

At the synagogue's annual meeting in June 1958, the members voted to purchase a parcel of land on West Hartford Road in Newington. The first service was held in the building Sept. 17, 1960, under the guidance of newly ordained Rabbi Marc Brownstein, who was the congregation's first full-time spiritual leader.

The synagogue grew quickly, and by 1960, approximately 300 families were meeting in their own building. An educational wing and social hall were added in 1965 and a memorial park was dedicated in 1979.

From that original group, Temple Sinai has grown to a membership of close to 400 families from 25 communities. The synagogue features a thriving religious school, men's club and sisterhood, youth groups and a full calendar of events. A day care center has been part of the building since the early 1980s.

"We have always [been] a very caring community. I would suggest that the hiring of Rabbi [Jeffrey] Bennett really helped bring our temple family to the place we are today. He has been our rabbi for nearly half of our 60 years, 29 years, and

Former congregation presidents David Scheinerman and Carol Benjamin, current President Ken Lesser and Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett pose for a recent photo as they prepare to celebrate Temple Sinai's 60th anniversary.

"We are a community that is warm and welcoming and focused on people and spirituality."

– Ken Lesser

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UCONN HEALTH

The Temple Sinai Klezmer band was formed in 1990.

Photo by Leonard J. Lang

is an extraordinary spiritual leader," said Temple President Ken Lesser, who's been involved with Temple Sinai for more than 40 years.

"He is incredibly warm and welcoming, which is the reputation our temple enjoys. In fact, many temples have been losing members since the economic downturn while we have held pretty steady. Rabbi Bennett is the primary reason for that and we feel so grateful," he added.

"I grew up in Temple Sinai. My earliest and best memory of my childhood was my bar mitzvah nearly 40 years ago. It was a very special experience."

Bennett became the congregation's spiritual leader July 1, 1987, following the brief tenure of Rabbi Jon Haddon. Bennett brought a fresh perspective to the congregation, which numbered about 260 families when he first arrived.

"I brought about many changes in the congregation. I brought a lot of tradition back to the congregation. For example, I wear a kippah (yarmulke) and tallis [prayer shawl]. I added many more traditional rituals to the worship services," he said.

"Singing and chanting became an integral part of worship. I truly believe in participation on behalf of the congregation. We have become a singing congregation," he added.

"I also brought a great deal of modernity as well. I play the guitar and use it at services. I think it's important for the congregation to be more proactive during worship rather than passive," Bennett said.

"I hold an Ask the Rabbi at services approximately every six weeks, which allows congregants to ask questions and share comments. We also hold a Torah study session every now and then where the congregants participate in discussing the scriptural reading of the week."

The synagogue has several musical groups including: the Temple Sinai Klezmer band, which was formed in 1990; an adult choir, which was added in 1999; and a children's choir, which was started in 2000.

The congregation has a commitment to ending hunger. It recently held a musical event to benefit Foodshare and once a month members go to the Mercy Shelter in Hartford to buy, cook and serve the residents of the shelter.

Each year, the congregation holds a "Mitzvah Day" where members volunteer for various projects. Looking toward the future, Lesser is optimistic.

"I see us continuing to be a thriving temple community and one that focuses on spiritual worship and doing good deeds in the community," he said.

He added that it is a welcoming congregation.

"We are trying to foster audacious hospitality. I learned that phrase at a conference. We are a community that is warm and welcoming and focused on people and spirituality," Lesser said.

"It's a whole approach to people and being receptive of new ideas from people, being receptive of all different types of lifestyles and welcoming all different types of people, ideas and lifestyles. That diversity is a strength."

Bennett agreed.

"We pride ourselves on being an inclusive congregation. We have many interfaith families. I encouraged gays and lesbians to join our temple family. I perform marriages for gay and lesbian couples," he said.

"Many Jews felt themselves on the fringe of the community. I want Temple Sinai to feel like a home for all people, regardless of background or status or social connections. Temple Sinai has changed greatly throughout these past 30 years. We are vibrant, inclusive, proactive congregation that sees ourselves as part of the greater community," he added.

"We stress social action. We do not live in a vacuum. We feel a responsibility to the entire community and do what we can to alleviate prejudice, discrimination, hunger, homelessness, etc.," Bennett said.

"What sets us apart from other congregations is our openness to all people. We adhere to the belief that all people are created in God's image and are worthy of respect and acceptance."

Temple Sinai will hold a 60th anniversary celebration April 29 through May 1. The weekend includes recognition of founding members, past presidents and past sisterhood presidents on Friday, a gala with dinner and dancing on Saturday and a community service project on Sunday.

Children from the religious school will be making special bags to collect for those suffering from hunger. As they celebrate the highlights of the past 60 years, the congregation is also looking ahead.

"Temple Sinai has a very bright future because we move along with the times and are accepting of all people who identify with our tradition," Bennett said.

Rita Miller, co-chairwoman of capital campaign; Mike Feldman, immediate past president; Lee Pollock, co-chairman of capital campaign; and then-president Jim Kostin, from left, at the groundbreaking for a major renovation of the synagogue.

"I have been at Temple Sinai 29 years and I count my blessings every day that I can be part of this vibrant, inclusive, warm and engaging congregation that maintains the highest of ideals." **NL**

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Photo by Mark Jahne

Seeking input

Open forum looks at development potential along CTfastrak corridor

by Mark Jahne
Editor

"The property values in places around transit tend to be higher and they are going up."
– Thomas Jost

The silver and green CTfastrak buses have been in operation for more than a year. Now that the system is running smoothly, attention is turning toward economic development along the Hartford-New Britain busway corridor.

The Hartford-New Britain Busway, officially known as CTfastrak, recently celebrated its first anniversary of service. Now the focus is turning to development along the 9.4-mile corridor that runs from Hartford through West Hartford and Newington, ending in Downtown New Britain.

A transit-oriented open house was held April 4 at the Elmwood Community Center in West Hartford. The auditorium was filled with posters and displays focused on each of the four busway communities. Opportunities were available for participants to make suggestions.

A half hour was set aside for participants to visit the displays and talk to the people who performed the market research.

Marketing and development studies have begun to identify the possibilities for bringing housing, retail and other revenue-producing uses to the corridor, which is part of the reason why CTfastrak was built.

The Newington display cited 22 percent employment growth already along the corridor. It listed the town's median income as $63,200 and pointed out that 10 percent of the population lives in some proximity to the Cedar Street and Newington Junction stations.

Thomas Jost was the primary speaker. He is a senior urban strategist with WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff, an engineering and consulting firm working under contract with the state.

The theme of the night was how to make the corridor more accessible

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for economic development and how to determine what kind of development is best for each of the four communities.

"Connecticut, like many other states, is dealing with sprawl," Jost said. "We see a tremendous amount of congestion on the highways."

Local roads are becoming more congested as well, he added.

Research shows that young professionals are leaving Connecticut at a rate of more than 20,000 annually. This leaves the state with a below average number of residents between the ages of 18 and 24.

Fifty-seven percent of this demographic leaves Connecticut to attend college elsewhere.

Jost said transit-oriented development, such as the CTfastrak corridor, is based upon the premise of building communities around transit. This helps create mixed uses that will attract these young professionals and encourage them to live and work in Greater Hartford.

"A very big trend in America is a lot less people are learning how to drive," he said.

They want to be able to walk, bicycle or ride mass transit to work. They want to be able to live their lives without being dependent upon an automobile.

Jost added transit-oriented development reduces the overall number of car trips, in turn reducing that road congestion. There is a direct financial benefit as well.

"The property values in places around transit tend to be higher and they are going up," he said.

That is true for both residential and other types of development, but this development needs to be what he called context sensitive, that is, appropriate to the individual parcel and community. What makes the most sense for Newington might not be applicable in the other three municipalities.

Jost called CTfastrak the gold standard of bus rapid transit, or BRT, projects across the country. It operates in many ways similar to a light rail system.

"BRTs are a relatively new phenomenon. How can we leverage CTfastrak in the communities it runs through? You're really trying to attract developers to the entire corridor," Jost said.

The corridor is historically a collection of large industrial sites and some of those large parcels are available for reuse. One of the hindrances along the Newington portion is that some of the best parcels for development have limited or no access. Others are located within wetlands.

Housing development is a possibility as well as retail oriented to serve the bus riders, in the opinion of the folks at WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Jost said all four communities should consider zoning changes to best utilize busway development opportunities. He conceded that this can be difficult to do for political and other reasons. Hartford already changed the zoning around its Parkville station.

He pointed out that a dozen major employers and institutions are located within three miles of CTfastrak. They include Central Connecticut State University, the University of Saint Joseph, Aetna and Hartford Hospital.

Studies show that more of their employees are using CTfastrak than previously rode the bus to work.

Town Planner Craig Minor attended the forum on behalf of town government. He studied the exhibits, listened to the speakers and talked with representatives of the consultants and the DOT.

"The TPZ is in the process of adopting regulations for the Cedar Street station," he said. "It shouldn't be controversial."

Minor said the new zoning regulations will offer incentives for retail and mixed-use development in that area. This could include light manufacturing, office buildings or residential properties.

"Half of our TOD district is flood plain or wetlands," he said.

That takes those parcels out of consideration. The Newington Junction station is somewhat hindered by both a brook and railroad tracks.

Minor thinks that area may become more attractive for development in a couple of years when Amtrak constructs a rail passenger station there. People will be able to board a train in Newington and ride it to New York City and back. **NL**

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Mercury Thermostats	Disinfectants	Kerosene & Fuel Oil
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www.themdc.com

Events spotlight

Friends of the Library Book Sale

April 29 to May 1
Newington Senior & Disabled Center
120 Cedar St.
860-665-8700 or newingtonct.gov
The Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library present their spring book sale to raise money for library programming. A preview will be held from 5:30-8:30 p.m. April 29 with an admission price of $5. Sales hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 30 and noon to 3 p.m. May 1. Buy a Friends' green bag for $7 on Sunday and fill it; refills are $6. Thousands of hardcover, paperback and children's books will be on sale, along with a selection of CDs, videos and DVDs.

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2929 Berlin Turnpike
860-666-5026
The Newington Art League is sponsoring a spring paint party and Stacey Grindle of The Loaded Brush Paint Parties will be the instructor, teaching step by step how to paint beautiful pink pansies on a 16-by-20 canvas. A fundraiser for the Newington Art League Scholarship Fund, the space will be limited to 20 participants at a fee of $30 per person. Call to register. Checks may sent to Flo Dickie, 23 Frederick St., Newington, CT 06111.

Comedy Night

May 14, 6:30 p.m.
Indian Hill Country Club
111 Golf St.
860-666-2089
The Newington Chamber of Commerce presents a night of laughter with headline comedian Dave Reilly. The evening begins with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar, followed by an opening act and then Reilly's performance. Tickets are $30 and must be purchased in advance.

Newington Library 5K Challenge

May 15, 9 a.m.
Mill Pond Park
860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library
This will be the 20th year of this walk and run event, which benefits the Lucy Robbins Welles Library. Registration forms are available at the library and on its website. Online registration is available at active.com. Pre-registration is $10 for children 12 and under and $20 per adult. Same-day registration is $10 for children 12 and under and $25 per adult.

Motorcycle Madness

May 19, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Mill Pond Park
860-665-8666 or newingtonct.gov/parksandrec
Newington Parks and Recreation presents its first Motorcycle Madness event featuring hundreds of motorcycles, food and beverage trucks, live music provided by In The Groove, friendly contests, and more. General admission is $5 and the bike show contest entry fee is $10. Motorcycles will be judged in categories including perfect paint, terrific tank, crazy chrome, sponsors choice and the Mayor's Motorcycle Madness Award. All proceeds will go to fund the Extravaganza fireworks show July 16.

Boy Scout Troop 347 Golf Tournament

May 24, 11:30 a.m.
Indian Hill Country Club
860-559-5539 or troop347golf@gmail.com
This is Troop 347's first golf tournament and proceeds will be used to provide enrichment and leadership programs to its members. Funds will go toward such things as programming, supplies and scholarships for scouts. The registration fee of $150 includes 18 holes of golf, a cart, lunch and dinner. Dinner-only guests are invited for $50. Sponsorships are available at various levels.

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Applications are available from DeMarco Management Corporation, 117 Murphy Rd, Hartford, CT 06114; by phone 860-951-9411 x252 or 254; by email compliance@demarcomc.com; using the AT&T relay service by dialing 711

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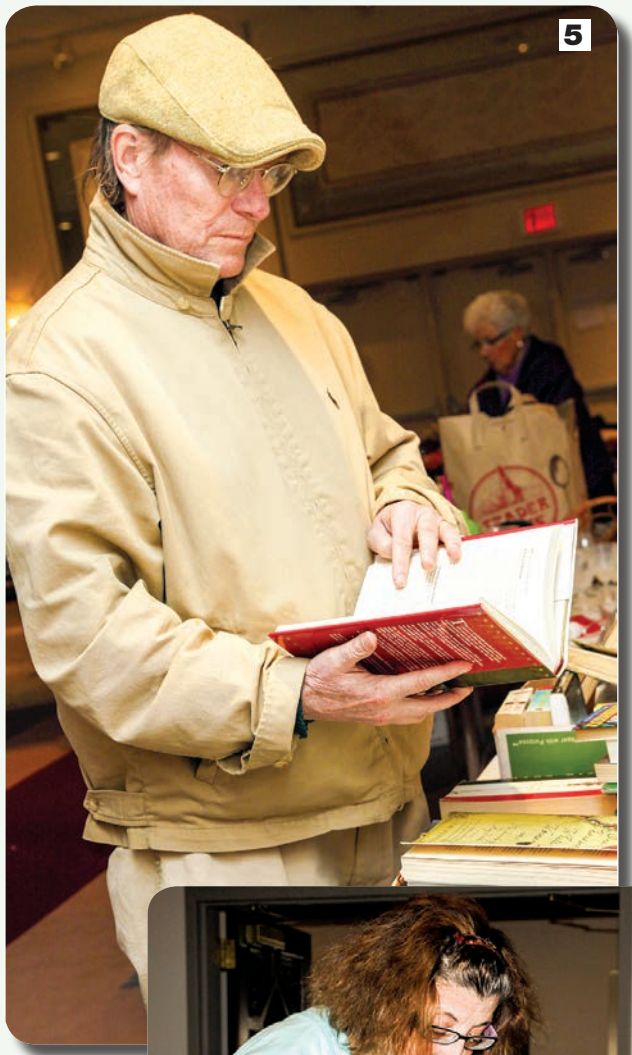
Slice of LIFE

photos by Lisa Brisson

Hundreds of bargain shoppers gathered at Temple Sinai as its Sisterhood held its annual Spring Rummage Sale. Home furnishings, sewing machines, clothing, dishes, shoes and almost everything in between could be found for a low price. Proceeds will support the Sisterhood's efforts, such as purchasing refreshments after services and a new freezer for the social hall's kitchen. All items not sold at the event were donated to Savers stores.

Temple Sinai Rummage Sale

1. James States looks through the mounds of clothing for some good deals. **2.** Jane Roth prices an electric blanket. **3.** Carol Walenski browses through the racks of dresses. **4.** Sisterhood volunteer Ann Siegel stops by the check-out table to give her pal Rose Ulan a hug. **5.** Brian Riley finds some interesting book and DVD titles. **6.** Jeri King checks out the household linens for sale. **7.** Phyllis Battisti gets a hand with pricing and sorting from Lori Sullivan. **8.** All sorts of used items are donated for sale. **9.** Cindy Fenton arranges household items after a rush of shoppers leave. **10.** Rabbi Jeffrey Bennett stops by to see how the sale is progressing with volunteer Bernice Black and sale Chairwoman Jane Roth.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News roundup

1

Tops in their schools

1. Superintendent of Schools William Collins recently honored the top students in each of the Newington Public Schools for the month of March. They are, back from left, Din Tahirovic of Elizabeth Green School, Sarah Ericson of Newington High School, Grace Canepari of John Wallace Middle School and Elizabeth Gallagher of Anna Reynolds School; front from left, Matthew Samarotto of Martin Kellogg Middle School, Katherine Bohlke of Ruth Chaffee School and Sean Fleming of John Paterson School.

Picking a new manager

The Town Council will host a public meeting at 7 p.m. May 3 in Room L-101 at town hall to solicit public input on hiring a new town manager. Another meeting will be held at 11 a.m. May 18 in the auditorium of the senior and disabled center/

The town has hired Randi Frank Consulting to facilitate these meetings. Anyone who would like to comment, but is unable to attend either meeting, may do so by emailing randi@randifrank.com.

Come to Preschool Play Nights

The Newington Parks and Recreation Department presents Preschool Play Nights for ages 3-5 from 5:30-7 p.m. May 3 and June 6 at the Creative Playtime Preschool, located in the lower level of the United Church of Christ, 1075 Main St.

2

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Each night will offer a themed craft, story time, and play time. Children must be toilet trained and wear play clothes. The fee per night is $12 for residents and $15 for non-residents and pre-registration is required. For further information call 860-665-8666 or see newingtonct.gov/parksandrec.

Rotary celebrates birthday

2. The Rotary Club of Newington joined with other clubs around the globe to mark the 111th birthday of Rotary International. Members enjoyed a special cake while President Cherilyn Spatola summarized some of the accomplishments of the club and its worldwide counterparts.

There are 1.2 million Rotarians around the world. They are guided by the motto "service above self" and work toward making the world a better place. Pictured are, from left, LeeAnn Morrone, secretary; Cherilyn Spatola, president; Mike Turgeon, vice president and Jackie Martin, treasurer.

Aiding the children

4. Members of the GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club delivered more than 100 new pajamas and 70 children's books to the Prudence Crandall Center in New Britain March 29. Shown, from left, are Gabrielle Nadeau, Diane Rickenbacker, Jo Late and Carolyn Jasper.

Middlewoods turns 13

Middlewoods of Newington independent and assisted living community celebrated its 13th anniversary March 11 with a South Pacific-themed party. The event featured fun vintage food and drinks, a 1940s USO show, music and dancing, and entertainment by the Dick Santi Orchestra, a 17-piece big-band ensemble.

Staff and residents dressed for the occasion in polka dots, military garb and American Red Cross medical attire, while some made appearances as Bob Hope, Carmen Miranda and Dean Martin.

They speak well

3. The Cedar Hill Toastmasters recently held a speech contest in the Tall Tales and International Speech categories. Winners in the International Speech contest were Kevin Finn, first place; Paul Horvath, second place; and Joyce Boncal, third place.

The Tall Tales contest winner was Kevin Finn. Cedar Hill Toastmasters of Newington's purpose is to teach speaking and leadership skills in a supportive and educational environment.

Town-wide art show returns

The annual Newington Public Schools' Town-wide Art Show is open to the public through May 20. It is being held on the third floor of town hall, 131 Cedar St. Viewing hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Outstanding and unique art created by students from all grade levels in the seven public schools is

represented and includes drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, copper enameling and mixed media.

NSAF offers loans

Applications are available for Newington Student Assistance Fund interest-free student loans. NSAF is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help Newington residents obtain post-secondary education or training. This financial aid is awarded on the basis of the needs and relative merits of the applicants.

All funds used to issue loans are raised through an annual solicitation drive. The loan amount is $1,000 and students may reapply each year. Loan recipients pay the principal back in monthly installments following graduation or the termination of their studies or training.

NSAF also administers two annual scholarships that are awarded to a male and a female student at Newington High School. This scholarship was originally administered by the directors of the Indian Hill Country Club and was transferred to the fund in 1994. In addition, NSAF presents the Cammy O'Connor Book Awards to a member of each class.

Applications are available online at nsafinfo.org and in the following locations: high school counseling office, Lucy Robbins Welles Library and the Newington branches of TD Bank. Completed applications must be submitted to the high school counseling office no later than June 3.

Flags will honor veterans

The GFWC-Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club is conducting its annual "Flags of Appreciation" fundraiser to benefit veterans and current members of the U.S. armed forces.

Personalized flags in memory of, or in honor of, specific individuals will be displayed, in alphabetical order, May 28 at Garfield and Mazzoccoli Way in Newington on the Newington Memorial Day Parade route and at the Broad Street Green near the reviewing stand on the Wethersfield Memorial Day Parade route.

Flags, available for a donation of $10 each, may be ordered through May 13. Application forms will be available at Newington Parks and Recreation, the Newington Senior & Disabled Center, Wethersfield Parks and Recreation, and other community locations. For information call 860-788-3415 or email hough_john_c@hotmail.com.

High school seeks support

5. Newington High School recently hosted a special look into its academies for members of the business community. Industry professionals had a chance to visit the school to learn more about the benefits of becoming a community partner with the academy programs.

NHS students can participate in the Culinary & Hospitality Academy, Finance & Business Academy, and the IT & Digital Innovation Academy. The district is seeking to build meaningful partnerships with local business professionals to support these programs.

The purpose of the partnerships is to provide students who are enrolled in the academy programs with learning experiences such as job shadow opportunities, internships, guest speakers and mentors. The partnerships provide the businesses with financial benefits such as using the internships to recruit and hire entry-level workers for after-school jobs, summer positions, or even post-graduation jobs.

Health district stresses bicycle safety

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1.7 million

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Americans develop a traumatic brain injury every year. Many of these injuries can be prevented with the use of properly-fitted helmets.

The Central Connecticut Health District sells bicycle helmets year-round that come in a variety of colors for children and adults, ranging from toddler sizes to adult XL. The cost is $10.

They are available for purchase at the health district headquarters in Wethersfield town hall. For further information call 860-721-2822.

Summer work available

The town Parks and Recreation Department is recruiting summer park staff. All applicants should be 18 years of age and hold a valid Connecticut driver's license. They should be able to cut grass, empty trash and perform other duties.

The hours are Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All applicants must fill out an employment application, available at newingtonct.gov or the parks and recreation office in town hall.

Rotary donates dictionaries

6. Members of the Newington Rotary Club provided 360 dictionaries for students in all four Newington public elementary schools, in addition to Emmanuel Christian Academy and St. Mary School. The club first introduced the dictionary giveaway project to Newington schools in 2007.

Third grade students in Kathi Rossi's class at Ruth Chaffee School were eager to receive new dictionaries donated by Rotarians, including Robert Randich and David Johnson.

Calling all mayors

7. Former Newington mayors, from left, Rodney Mortensen, Robert Randich and Stephen Woods reminisce with current Mayor Roy Zartarian and host/producer Steve Parker following a taping of Newington Community Television's "Talk to the Mayor" show.

They talked about recently deceased former mayors Dom Mazzoccoli and William Reynolds. NCTV televises the live "Talk to the Mayor" show on the first Monday of each month at 8 p.m. on cable channel 14. **NL**

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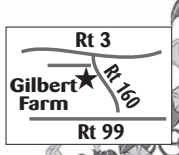

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Super snacks

Healthy, fun treats your kids will love

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Every parent knows the plaintive cry of "I'm hungry; what's there to eat?" Whether it's after school or for a summer playdate, snacks can be an important nutrition boost, or even a fun project.

"Snacks are considered mini-meals and help children focus at school, on homework and provide them with energy, vitamins and minerals to grow along with satisfying their hunger monster. Snacks are a great way for kids to enjoy fruits, vegetables, yogurt and other foods they may not be getting at their regular meals. Make sure to offer snacks that contain both protein and fiber such as a clementine and a cheese stick. Snacks help children refuel between meals and satisfy their appetites," noted Beth Chatfield, clinical dietitian with Connecticut Children's Medical Center, who also works with the CCMC Specialty Care Center in Farmington.

"As a professionally trained chef, one of my greatest joys is being in the kitchen and experimenting with new recipes. Over the past several months, I have been focusing most of my experimentation on recipes that appeal to kids," said Rita Neal, a mother of two.

She helped a group of parents organize Growing Great Schools, with a mission to promote childrens' and family wellness

"One of the ways Growing Great Schools does this is by offering getCOOKing, a program that teaches kids and teens how to cook. In addition, getCOOKing focuses on where food actually comes from, why it's important to eat local, seasonal foods and food traditions," Neal said.

In addition to creating recipes, Neal also likes to keep easy-to-grab foods for snacks, including apple slices, red pepper slices, carrot sticks, celery sticks, sliced cheddar cheese, clementines, frozen edamame in pods, nuts, bananas and other fruit.

Of course, having healthy foods on hand and getting kids to eat them are two different things, even when you're an accomplished chef.

Executive Chef Jeffrey Gordon of Stew Leonard's in Newington, said that when his kids were in elementary and middle schools, he would go into their classrooms and make fun dishes.

"Meanwhile, they won't eat anything unless it's brown," he said of his kids who are now 17 and 20. "With my son, if it's not pizza or pasta or some type of brown substance, it's still really tough and I'm trained at what I do!"

Trying to get extra nutrition such as protein and iron into his daughter's diet has been another challenge. She is an athlete and also has low iron levels.

"She loves smoothies, and basically I've been able to switch the ingredients around, where she doesn't know they're in there. I'm looking for how do I get the vitamins and minerals and things they need to make them healthy, to help with their brain growth and their endurance."

Gordon said that younger children are often interested in the cooking process and want to be involved, such as decorating gingerbread men.

"A kid, especially in elementary school, loves to be interactive with whatever you're making. I think kids want to be part of the mix," he said.

LIFE spoke to several chefs in the area to get some of their favorite, original recipes for making snacks for kids.

If you're thinking ahead to summer, another session of getCOOKing at the Mandell JCC in West Hartford will be held the week of August 18.

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The program is sponsored by Growing Great Schools, based in West Hartford. For information visit growinggreatschools.org.

Executive Chef Jeffrey Gordon of Stew Leonard's in Newington has developed the following recipes, testing them on his toughest customers – his own kids.

Chef Jeff's Power Punch Smoothie

Ingredients:

1/3 cup almond milk
6-8 strawberries, stems removed
1 whole banana
1 tbsp. blackstrap molasses
1 tbsp. agave nectar or honey
½ cup crushed ice

Directions:

Add all ingredients into blender and blend until smooth. Makes one serving.

Maribeth Abrams is a Glastonbury-based nutritionist and cookbook author specializing in a plant-strong style of eating for health and well-being. The following recipes are from her cookbook, "The 4 Ingredient Vegan." Learn more at maribethabrams.com.

White Bean Nacho Dip (vegan)

A versatile, high-fiber, dairy-free "cheezy-style" dip served hot or cold with chips, or cooked into quesadillas with fresh salsa for a zesty and nutritious meal.

Yield: 2 3/4 cups

Ingredients:

1 can (15 ounces) white beans (such as great northern beans or navy beans), rinsed and drained
1 cup salsa
1/2 cup nutritional yeast flakes
2 tablespoons cashew butter
Salt

Directions:

Combine beans, salsa, nutritional yeast and cashew butter in food processor and process until completely smooth. Season with salt to taste. Serve immediately or transfer to a storage container and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Peanut Butter Chews (vegan)

"Turn snacking into an afternoon healthy baking activity!" Abrams suggested. "With a recipe this easy, even the little ones can lend a hand. The ingredients are wholesome and the batter is delicious eaten straight from the bowl."

Yield: About 36 cookies

Ingredients:

1/2 cup natural peanut butter
2/3 cup agave nectar
1 1/2 cups rolled oats - or quick-cooking oats if you want softer cookies
1/3 cup chocolate chips, dried cherries or raisins

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Put the peanut butter and agave nectar in bowl and stir until thoroughly combined. Stir in the oats and chocolate chips. Drop the batter onto the prepared sheet using a teaspoon and bake for 10 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet for 10 minutes then transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

"There are times when something more substantial is necessary and I have a few tried-and-true recipes that have passed muster not only on my kiddos but also with the kids that have taken my getCOOKing classes," said Chef and Culinary Educator Rita Neal. "One favorite is the seedy granola bar.... These are sweet, chewy, packed with flavor, kids universally love them, and they are filling, have protein, fat, fiber and minerals. ... Another great feature of these is they do not need baking! So fast and easy."

Granola Bars

Ingredients:

1 cup packed pitted prunes
1/4 cup honey or maple syrup
1/4 cup sun nut butter or peanut butter
3/4 cup pumpkin seeds
1 1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions:

Process prunes in a food processor until it forms a dough like ball on the side of processor. You may toast the oats for 10 minutes in a 325 F oven. Warm honey and peanut butter. Place prunes, oats, honey and peanut butter mixture, pumpkin seeds, vanilla and cinnamon into a large bowl. Mix everything together making sure the prune mixture gets distributed. Transfer to an 8x8 dish and press down firmly until flattened. Cover and let set in the refrigerator, or in the freezer. Cut and wrap individual bars and store in the fridge or freezer for ready-to-go snacking.

Chatfield has developed the following recipes. For more ideas, she recommends checking out snacks from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics online.

Multi-Layer Parfait in a Cup

Ingredients:

seedless grapes, quartered
plain nonfat Greek yogurt
diced pears or any other fruit (strawberries, blueberries, mandarin oranges)
granola
roasted pumpkin seeds
2 teaspoons maple syrup

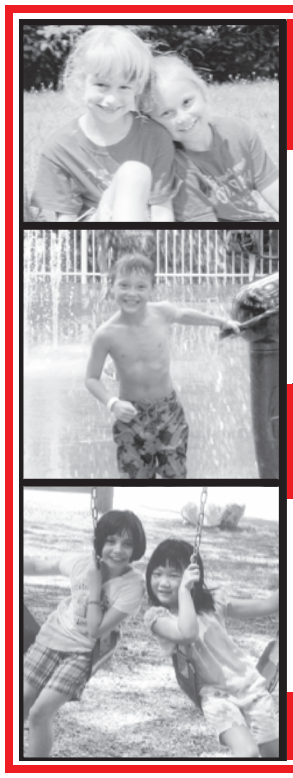
Directions:

Layer all ingredients, dividing equally in mini containers

Left Over Trail Mix

Have kids get a big bowl and put in leftovers of opened bags of:

popcorn
high fiber cereal
whole wheat Goldfish
nuts (if over age 4)
mini chocolate chips **NL**



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Help your child love *music* and *dance*

Classes offer lifelong benefits

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

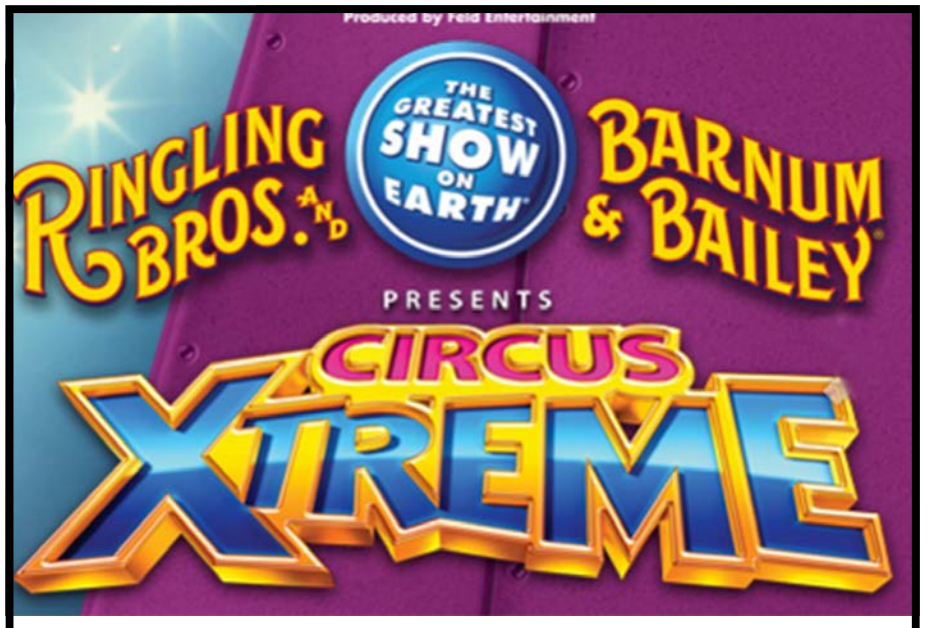
It may be fun to imagine your child as the next Joshua Bell or Misty Copeland when you sign up for music or dance lessons. Your child may have visions of being a star, basking in the spotlight surrounded by legions of adoring fans.

While many develop a lifelong love of music and dance, some children quickly decide that the lessons aren't for them. What's a parent to do when a child starts saying "I don't want to go!" when it's time for the weekly lesson?

The first aspect to consider is whether your child is indeed old enough for the activity. Todd Zurman, owner of Vortex Guitar Studio in Wethersfield, said that's more of a factor than many parents realize.

"I think in a perfect world after 8 [years of age] is a great time to start playing. Older students, they know what they want to play when they come in. They know their musical style," he said. "If they can't spell guitar, they probably shouldn't be taking it."

However, Zurman noted that it's not



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"I had one 5-year-old who liked listening to the Beatles, who liked listening to Led Zeppelin. He had great taste in music. That kid was a breeze to teach. I have 8-year-olds who don't listen to music; their parents don't like to listen to music," he said.

There's also a practical consideration with certain instruments, such as the guitar. And that's simply the size of the instrument may be too much for your child to handle.

"At 6 years old the smaller guitars can be harder to play," he said.

Other instruments might be more appropriate for younger students, such as piano.

"I think 5 seems to be the age that makes sense for starting off. I've had 4-year-olds and they can't sit still and they're not really ready," said Mike Montgomery of Newington Music, who teaches piano, drums, guitar and bass. "I have a lot of piano students. At that age it's a good instrument. There isn't a physical requirement on your fingers like guitar. Piano is great for 5-year-olds."

Don't worry that your child is too old to start. Despite the influence of his guitar-playing father, Zurman didn't start to play until he was in seventh grade. Previously, he played drums.

He said to give the lessons time.

"Dance particularly taught me discipline and gave me a love and appreciation for the arts. ... Kids need an outlet, a place to let go and be themselves. It takes time to find that, and it forces them to work hard. But it's worth it, for them and the parents."

– Diana Evjen

"If they've been wanting to play and they come to the first lesson and think they don't like teacher, take a month of lessons. It takes time to get used to each other," he recommended.

If your child still isn't into it, it may just be that the child is not ready.

Or, perhaps the child wants to play something else.

"If they want to play drums, let them try being a drummer. If they want to play guitar, let them try being a guitar player. They should have freedom of choice to try different things," he said.

Managing your child's expectations is also important.

Kids sometimes quit because "it's harder than they thought," Zurman said. "Years ago when Guitar Hero came out, kids were taking guitar because of the game. Then they find out they can't just play like Jimi Hendrix. They didn't know they'd have to practice."

Gregory Colossale, founder of BackBeat City in Glastonbury, agreed.

"It appears recently that it's instant gratification that they receive from other means. That isn't something that comes quickly from piano. I find that a constant issue. [Students are] a little more impatient," said Colossale, who teaches piano, voice, show choir and acting. "They're not understanding that it's the practicing, the time spent outside of the lesson, is when they get better. It's not in the 30 or 40 minutes we spend together once a week."

He suggested working practice into what a child already is doing.

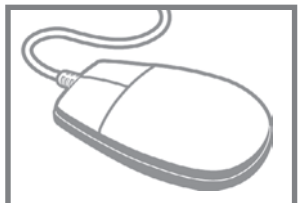
"[A child] is probably watching an hour of television a day, and there's probably 22 minutes of commercials. If they practice during the commercials, that's a really smart way to practice. It's blended inside of their life. You play into their world and show them how the piano can fit in."

While technology can be a hindrance – Zurman doesn't even have a computer in his office – there are ways that it can be helpful.

Colossale said that students can record themselves playing.

"They're able to hear how simple they once sounded and how they grow," he said.

Colossale suggested that parents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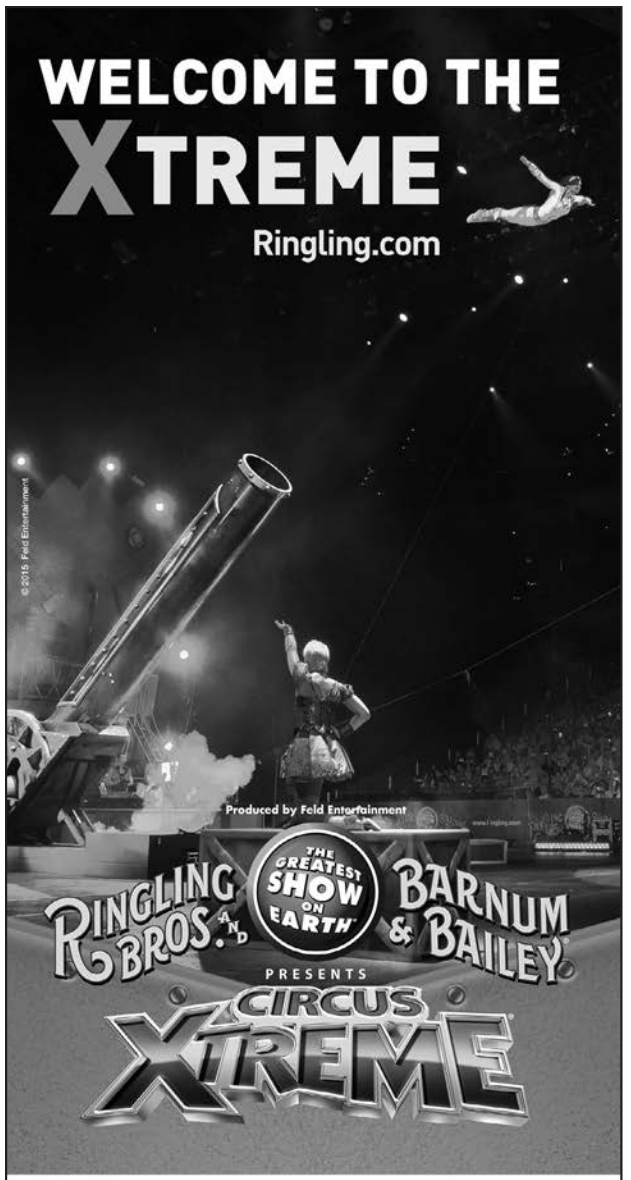
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LIFE with kids

can help their child by making sure the piano is accessible, without books, plants or clutter blocking it.

"I think the best thing for a parent to do is encourage their young person to go up to the piano without prompting. Whether they improvise or make some noise or practice, encourage that and allow that to happen as much as possible," he said.

"Try not to complain about the noise," he added. "I was fortunate as a young person, I just banged on the piano and taught myself. Then it became an interest. I think it's about accessibility and your attitude toward it."

Gauging the love

While students are a little older when they begin music lessons, dance classes often start much earlier.

Shannon Barry, co-owner, Shamrock School of Irish Dance, which has satellite locations in West Hartford and Simsbury, started dancing when she was 4. She said that children have varied reasons for not wanting to come to lessons – and sometimes, it's a lot more basic than parents realize.

"Through the years, I have found that the reason for young children between the ages of 4 and 7 would be that they simply don't want to leave the house. This might come as a surprise. However, when I have asked parents why, the answer is, 'When trying to leave the house to go to dance class, their child simply says I don't want to go.' I then have said to the parent that their child is doing well in class, pays attention, and understands and follows directions and movements, and really seem to enjoy it while in class. Unfortunately, it seems, possibly, parents might be a bit too willing to say OK when the child doesn't want to go because, as parents, we are all so busy with work, housekeeping and other activities that it becomes easier for the parent to just say OK to their child and not go to class rather than telling their child, 'It is time for dance class and we need to keep the commitment we made and finish the year,'" said Barry, who is certified through An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha.

She said it's important to communicate with the instructor when a young child doesn't want to go to class.

"Ask to speak to the teacher and see if they are participating in class. Also, if your dance school allows you to watch a class from time to time, you should be able to tell how your child is doing that way," she said. "You definitely will know if your child enjoys what they are doing if they are dancing around your house practicing [what] they are working on in dance class."

It's a different situation for kids in middle or high school.

"The main reason usually is they have joined an after-school sport or have a lot of homework," Barry said.

Diana Evjen of Evjen Academy of Performing Arts in Farmington said that while scheduling is an issue, it can also help define where a child's interests are.

"The biggest reason for kids dropping their sports or extracurricular activities is overscheduling. And that isn't a bad thing. We have so many opportunities for children these days and they have the ability to find activities that suit them. We put them in dance and soccer and Girl Scouts or choir, and through the process of elimination, children are able to choose their best fit," Evjen said. "Parents should recognize that children are in the learning process, just the beginning, of their journey into finding their strong suits. With my own kids, I try to gauge their 'love' for the sport or activity."

She doesn't evaluate this by their willingness to practice, rather by their attitudes during and after the activity.

"As a mom in this generation, where a whole world is available for kids through iPads and cell phones and Xbox, etc., I feel like kids need to do something, anything, in a group or as part of a team, where they train [or] practice together and learn how to work as a team player," she said. "Dance particularly taught me discipline and gave me a love and appreciation for the arts. Everyone is different, but dance was and still is my outlet and I needed that when I was growing up. Kids need an outlet, a place to let go and be themselves. It takes time to find that, and it

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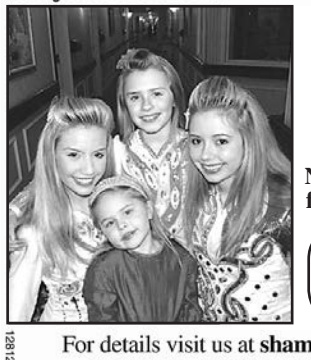
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LIFE with kids

"If they want to play drums, let them try being a drummer. If they want to play guitar, let them try being a guitar player. They should have freedom of choice to try different things."

– Mike Montgomery

forces them to work hard. But it's worth it, for them and the parents."

Barry noted that the parents' attitude can make a difference.

"The parent's job is to give encouragement and to do the best they can. Make sure you are available to watch them practice when asked. Be excited for them if they have had a hard time with a new move or routine and now have mastered it," she recommended.

Barry said there are numerous benefits to taking classes.

"Dance or music is a great outlet for children to relieve stress. It builds confidence, great self-esteem and dance, of course, helps with physical fitness," she said, adding that dance and music can also help with math and public speaking.

Montgomery actually builds math into his lessons, such as talking about how many quarter notes fit in a measure. He also noted that music lessons can help children find their place in the world.

"It gives them something to be good at. It happened to me. I was good at music when I was younger; there were other kids like me in band. I remember really liking it and I was good at it, and I could fit in. I wasn't the sports kid. When I was in gym, I'm the last kid to get picked," he remembered. "If a kid likes music, it's a good thing to try. You can really see them light up." NL

Learn more at backbeatcity.com, evjenacademy.com, newingtonmusic.com, shamrockdancestudio.com and vortexguitarstudio.com.

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Popular playtime picks

Today's hottest games to entertain kids this summer

Compiled by Alison Jalbert

Zombie Run!

"The cards all have zombie kind of things on them. Zombies are popular and it's an easy-to-learn game. That's part of the draw; when people come in looking for games, as an adult, they want to have fun playing the game, too."
–Sara Scott, owner of The Perfect Toy in Avon

IQ Bit

"It's a one-player game with 120 different ways to play it. It starts out really easy, but with 120 different ways to play, it gets harder as you go on. We have a demo of it up on the counter [and people] really get into it. That's always an indication that it's a good game."
–Dave Ekwall, owner of The Wooden Toy in Wethersfield

Wet Head

"It's a new game – you wear a helmet filled with water and pull out a stick with the possibility of getting the whole helmet of water [on you]."
–Kim Reed, owner of Pinwheels Toys & Games in Glastonbury

Spot It!

"The cards have a variety of pictures on them, with one matching picture on every card. You want to be the first one to spot the match. Younger children do really well [with this game]. As an adult … we don't see it as quickly. It's challenging for adults – fun, but we don't tend to win."
–Deb Necker, owner of Necker's Toyland in Simsbury NL

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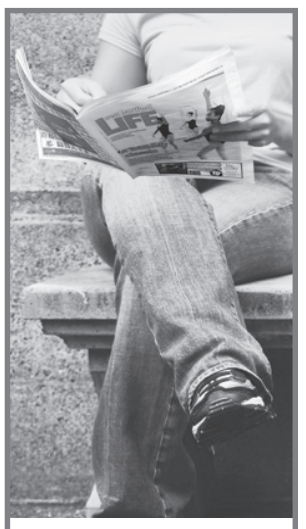

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May calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

1 **Friends of the Library Book Sale**, noon to 3 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library

3 **Let's Make Music Together,** noon, for ages 2-4 with a caregiver, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library

Half Day Fun, 2 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also May 17 and 31

4 **Just a Story and a Song,** 10:15 a.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also May 11 and 18

Paint Party, 6:30 p.m., Bertucci's, 2929 Berlin Turnpike, $30 fee payable in advance, 860-666-5026

5 **Family Storytime**, 6:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also May 12, 19 and 26

6 **Project Graduation Comedy Night & Dinner,** 6:30 p.m., $30 per person, Polish American Club, 140 Wilson Ave., 860-250-9837 or nmfcolonese@yahoo.com

9 **Babies Love Art,** 10:15 a.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

10 **Stories & Art,** noon, for ages 2-4 with a caregiver, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Medication Safety Seminar, 2 p.m., Jefferson House, 1 John H. Stewart Drive, registration required, 860-667-4453 or jeffersonhouse.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-205-9542 or 860-830-2129

11 **Junior Cookbook Club,** 6:30 p.m., for grades K-2, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

12 **MS Support Group,** noon to 2 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-667-1314 or 860-236-2751

Brown Bag It with a Book, noon, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Cozytime Stories, 4 p.m., for grades K-2, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Technology For U, 5:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library, also 1:30 p.m. May 26

14 **Comedy Night,** 6:30 p.m., Indian Hill Country Club, 111 Golf St., 860-666-2089

15 **Newington Library 5K Challenge,** 9 a.m., Mill Pond Park, 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library

Project Graduation Golf Tournament, 1 p.m., Indian Hill Country Club, $125 per golfer, 860-250-9837 or nmfcolonese@yahoo.com

17 **Play With Us,** 11:15 a.m., for young children with special needs, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also May 24

Film "The Intern," 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library

Teen Advisory Board, 2 p.m., for ages 13-18, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

18 **Chess Club,** 4 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library

Cookbook Club, 6:30 p.m., for grades 3-6, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Sarah Speaks Up – Journey to Empowerment, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

19 **Motorcycle Madness,** 5:30-8:30 p.m., Mill Pond Park, 860-665-8666 or newingtonct.gov/parksandrec

Excel 2013 Basics, 6:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

21 **Literary Blooms,** 10 a.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Tales to Tails, 1 p.m., read to a certified therapy dog, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 4:30 p.m. May 26

23 **Forever YA Book Club,** 6 p.m., for ages 14 and older, Lucy Robbins Welles Library,

24 **Boy Scout Troop 347 Golf Tournament,** 11:30 a.m., Indian Hill Country Club, 860-559-5539 or troop347golf@gmail.com

Let's Talk Movies With Bob Larsson: "Robin and the Seven Hoods," 6:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

GFWC Newington/ Wethersfield Woman's Club, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-666-4371

28 **Construction Club,** 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library,

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

People notes

1. Teodora "Tedy" Markova, a junior at Newington High School, competed at the World Junior Figure Skating Championships in Debrecen, Hungary, from March 14-20.

Kayla Carta was one of 160 students who presented their undergraduate research at Keene State College's 16th Annual Academic Excellence Conference.

Eric Walker was named to the dean's list at Mount Ida College.

Emily Evon and **Tayler Liedke** were named to the dean's list at the University of Delaware.

Brian Amato of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute wrestling team was recently named the WPI male student-athlete of the week. He capped a run of five wins in an eight-day span by going a perfect 2-0 in a tri-meet at the Coast Guard Academy.

Mirla Sales was named to the dean's list at Hofstra University.

Carly Cruff was named to the dean's list at Endicott College.

Matthew Bollacker and **Danielle Chylinski** were named to the dean's list at Western New England University.

Sean Harlow and **Benjamin Page** were named to the dean's list at Becker College.

Peter Galante was named to the dean's list at Siena College. A member of the men's tennis team, he was also named to the MAAC All Academic Team.

Sarah Abrams, Michael Andrews, Melissa Bengtson, Abby Bowtruczyk, Megan Chasse, Lizaida Collazo, Sarah Collin, Marissa Hawley, Nana Kyem, Veronika Latawiec, Jaiashrie Lentini, Agnes Lewicki, Beata Lokteva, Rebecca Maston, Alyssa Pinho, Natalia Rozio, Melissa Ruiz, Alison Ryan, Rachel Ryan, Justyna Sikorska, Evelyn Soria, Amanda Van Buren and **Alyssa Vereneau** were named to the dean's list at the University of Saint Joseph.

Alyssa DePaolis is among 38 University of Delaware freshmen in the inaugural class of UD World Scholars. She was also named to the dean's list.

Hannah Sisson was named to the

1

honors list at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Florham Campus.

Alexander Ericson was named to the dean's list at Merrimack College.

Daniel Roberts and **Natalie Zaleski** were named to the dean's list at Marist College.

Sebriana Ciarcia was named to the dean's list at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Florham Campus.

Amanda Rodriguez and **Alicia Rodriguez** were named to first honors for the second marking period at Mercy High School.

2. Karen Senteio was named the new director of consulting and training at Leadership Greater Hartford. She is a professional coach and owner of VERVE LLC, Consulting Services.

3. Wayne Gagnon completed the Leadership Challenge, one of the many leadership development

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experiences offered by Leadership Greater Hartford. He is the manager of system operations at Eversource Energy in Berlin.

4. Kaila Lozada, the leading female scorer in Newington High School soccer history, signed a national letter of intent to play soccer at the University of Hartford.

Tania Alekseyko, Karisa Curran, Nicole de Haas, Lauren Fredette, Kaylie Grenier, Jillian Hubeny, Courtney Maratta, Christina McCourt, Kimberlee Merrill, Vanessa Molina, Urszula Pacion, Jennifer Petrozza, Sunita Prestage, Amber Reyna, Keona Riley, Ermelinda Rrumbullaku, Brityn Todaro, Kimberly Weintraub, Mitchelle Williams, Victoria Brown, Andrew Ivanick, Kamil Koper, Jacqueline Latorre and **Nicole Rodrigues** were named to the dean's list at Goodwin College.

Gregory Stamm, Ian Aprea and **Shelby Payanis** were named to the dean's list at Roger Williams University.

Thank you to the 5,300 volunteers who helped change lives for children and families in our community last year.

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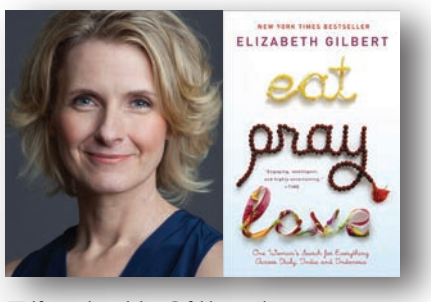

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Tania Alekseyko, Karisa Curran, Nicole de Haas, Lauren Fredette, Courtney Maratta, Christina McCourt, Vanessa Molina, Urszula Pacion, Amber Reyna, Brityn Todaro, Andrew Ivanick and **Kamil Koper** were named to the president's list at Goodwin College.

The following Newington Public School pupils participated in the 2016 Northern Region Music Festival held Feb. 20 at Central Connecticut State University. **Band: Erin Abrams, Brandon Baglan, Michael Bohlke, Luke Brown, Andrew Bugnacki, Reed Campbell, Sam Cultrera, Nathan dos Santos, Sean Gierwin, Amar Singh, Molly Smith and Riley Youmans. Jazz Band: Grace Canepari and Jordan Stergakis. Orchestra: Jessica Brescia and Jacob Cultrera. Chorus: Olivia Boling, Alan Chow, Brenda DeBlois, Julia Fiedziukiewicz, Lindsay Forauer, Meghana Gadde, Allison Goegel, Caroline Lynch, Danielle Kuwornu, Madison Massaro Cook, Julia Montgomery, Danielle Pantano, Marc Pantano, Nicole Parafati, Tiago Paula Santos, Samantha Reese, Aaron Schneider, Laila Tahirovic, Bryce Turner, Mia Vendetti, Jessica Zacharias** and **Ashley Zoll.**

Ray Neistat, a Newington High School senior, placed first at the CCC Diving Championships. He set the six-dive conference record with a score of 266 and set a team record in the 11-dive with a 453.1. He holds the NHS six dive and 11 dive records.

Michael Davies is a member of the NECHA American Conference champion ice hockey team at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Patrick Makles was named to the dean's list at Loyola University Maryland.

Brian Dunn, Nicholas Stamm and **Brendan Zotti** were named to the dean's honor list at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Petr Nikitin was named to the dean's list at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Tania Alekseyko, Karisa Curran, Nicole de Haas, Lauren Fredette, Courtney Maratta, Christina McCourt, Vanessa Molina, Urszula Pacion, Amber Reyna, Brityn Todaro, Andrew Ivanick and **Kamil Koper** were named to the president's list at Goodwin College.

5

Emilie Sienko earned first-semester honors at Kingswood Oxford School.

Brian Amato, a student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, earned Division III Scholar All-American honors from the National Wrestling Coaches Association. He was also recognized on the NEWA All-Academic team.

Marissa Simonetti performed in the inaugural concert in the new Fine Arts Building at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Carly McCarthy earned high honors for the third marking period at the University High School of Science and Engineering. **Roshini Avula** and **James Mouthaan** earned honors.

5. Sarah Dunn of Newington was honored during National Volunteer Week. As a volunteer with the Meriden Humane Society, she spends more than 500 hours a year feeding, walking and playing with large dogs. **NL**

Editorial

Enough with the texting while driving

It simply boggles the mind. Why would people think that they can take their eyes off the road while operating a car or truck without dramatically increasing the risk that they could cause a crash?

Common sense would suggest that anyone over the age of 5 would know better than to do that. Yet drivers are crashing every day all over the country because they consider text messaging more important than operating their vehicles in a safe manner.

We live in a society that celebrates and often demands instant gratification and, for the first time in human history, we have technology that allows us to satisfy that craving.

We just can't wait to respond to that phone call or text message.

In recent weeks there has been at least one fatal accident in Greater Hartford in which someone who was allegedly texting while driving struck and killed a pedestrian. Another alleged text messenger struck and injured a police officer working on a roadside construction job.

We shouldn't need to create a multi-million dollar campaign to educate motorists about the dangers of distracted driving, especially texting. Studies have shown that looking away from the road for just a few seconds is the equivalent of driving the length of a football field at 55 miles per hour while blindfolded.

Nobody in their right mind would do that.

Texting is in some ways even more dangerous than drunken driving because the person manipulating the cell phone is looking at the phone, not the road. One can only imagine the level of threat created by someone who is texting and intoxicated.

"I only took my eyes off the road for a second," is the common plea to police.

There is no voice or text message that is so important that it cannot wait a few minutes. But if one thinks it is, then pull off the road for a moment to send a reply.

Police departments all over this area conduct occasional distracted driving enforcement patrols.

Motorists drive right past uniformed cops with their phones in their hands. Then they act surprised when they are stopped.

The tickets are not cheap: $150 for a first offense, $300 for a second offense and $500 for all additional offenses. But that's not making enough of a difference.

Maybe the legislature should pass a law allowing police to confiscate cell phones for 24 hours when they catch someone using them illegally while driving. Perhaps the inconvenience will prove a better deterrent than the fines.

It's time we all learned to resist the craving for instant gratification and refrain from text messaging while driving. It's too late to say "I'm sorry" after someone has been killed or maimed.

Letter

Praises Friends of the Library

To the Editor:

Why do I have another long overdue thank you to the Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library?

The Friends financially support a program that includes free-and-reduced rate passes for 29 museums and area attractions. It is one user for each pass. The list of available passes is on the library's website newingtonct.gov/library.

Special features for this program include:

• Patrons can reserve passes online from the library's website.

• Patrons choose a specific day and can now print out the passes in advance of using them. The pass is only good for that specific day and then it expires.

This newly added feature not only is more convenient for many people as a way to get the pass, there is no late fee, as the pass is good for just the chosen day.

There are still a few passes that must be picked up at the library, checked out, and returned the next day to the library. How the program has grown. Between January 2015 through December 2015, passes were used 1,090 times, with an overall savings of $25,254 (average of $23 per usage).

Thank you, Friends. And thank you to our patrons who support the library. Your time and effort continue to benefit our patrons of all ages.

Judy Igielski

newington LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

Celebrate May...

The 5th month of the year is one featuring lots of events. Here's a look at historical weather related statistics for some of them.

Cinco de Mayo – average low: 45, high: 68; record low: 30 (2005), high: 93 (1949).

Mother's Day, the 8th this year – average low: 45, high: 69; record low: 31 (1968), high: 92 (2000). Just a day later, the 9th, marks the latest recorded snow of 1.3" at Windsor Locks, where the official records are kept.

Memorial Day, falling on the 30th – average low: 52, high: 75; record low: 37 (1961), high: 93 (1987).

The hottest temperature recorded in this month was 99 degrees, that happened twice (on the 20th in 1996 and then again on the 26th in 2010).

Averages are calculated over a three-decade timespan, 1981-2010. Records have been kept for the Greater Hartford Area for over 110 years, dating back to 1905.

Some notable astronomical events happening this month:

On the 21st, the Full Flower Moon – marking fertility with the warmer temperatures, named for the abundance of flowers coming into full bloom. Concerned about when to plant? The average last frost happens early in the month, so plan for around the 2nd week or later.

Then on the 23rd, Mars will be its brightest in over a decade. NL

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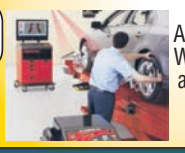

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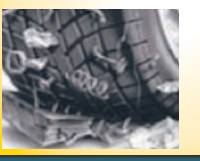

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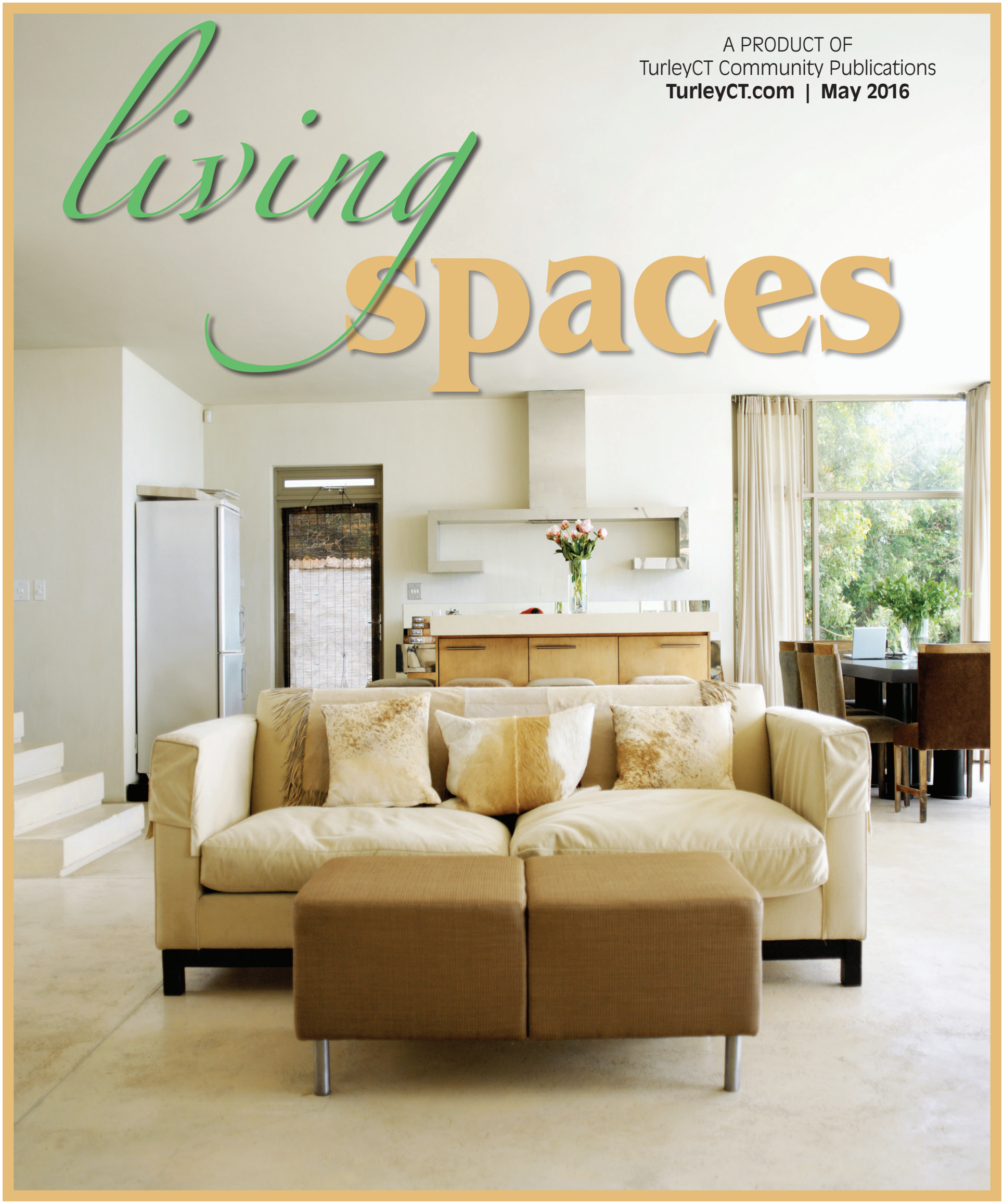

Room to spare

Consider the possibilities if you have an extra room

Extra rooms in a home can be transformed into special spaces.

Thomas Mach, owner of In the House and Through the Garden in Simsbury, said he thought converting an empty bedroom into a craft room was a great idea.

"I know many people are doing that," he said.

A crafty space

Having done the same thing with a couple rooms in the store, Mach had some thoughts on how to perfect the space for its new use.

"Start with a paint job so it has a very different look," he said.

Big on environmental matters, Mach suggests going with an eco-friendly paint with a lot of pigment to add an exciting burst of color to the walls.

"Paints with a lot of pigment can give you depth of color," he said." This is an opportunity to have fun in the room so you can have a splash of color."

Once the room has a fresh coat, the next step is adding storage, because, Mach said, whatever the craft project is, there [and] what kinds of activities they enjoy doing," he said.

An important step before bringing in equipment is installing the right kind of flooring for working out. Bentkowski recommends interlocking rubber tiles.

Then look at the logistics of the room and decide if you want a sound system, a television or both.

"You always want to look at cardio," Bentkowski said of choosing equipment.

The cardio equipment is going to depend on a few different things. First, there's preference. Is the room for someone who likes to walk, bike, run or who does all the above? What is their skill set and do they need something that is easy on their ankles, or will help them with balance?

"You can have the exact replica of the experience in the gym," but that equipment will be costly, Bentkowski said.

Once the desired elliptical, stationary bike or treadmill has been chosen, it's time to consider strengthening equipment.

"For strength, you have to look at how skilled the individual is," he said.

There are different pieces of equipment from multi-stations that enable a person to work on every body part to more specialized units.

"To accompany that, I think it would be great to have a set of dumbbells," Bentkowski said.

Set them on a four-foot rack and get an adjustable bench to use them. Some people like a pull-up station as well, but they're not for everybody.

Finally, there needs to be an area for doing core work with a tri-fold mat or a yoga mat, and possibly some kettle balls.

A fun place for escape

Linda Black of Linda P. Black Interiors in West Hartford thought the best use for a spare room would be an adult game room – "an oasis," as she dubbed the room, a space to escape to at the end of a long day.

For resale purposes, Black said she felt it was important not to change the room's structure or anchor anything to the walls.

The room should be painted in soothing colors and be a luxurious, plush spot in which to relax and "veg out," Black said.

For her, there would be no phone in the room. While there may be a television, it would be hooked up to the laptop, so folks can get away from watching cable and watch shows online.

"Turn the phone off; just try to get to another space," she said. "Try to get away from the rest of the family, maybe try to get away from work."

LIVING Spaces

She envisioned the space would be for a couple, like her own son and daughter-in-law, and would have two huge, oversized chairs.

"My son and his wife, they go home and play games," she said.

There would be a large chest between the chairs where the duo could each have a drink and where they would set their laptops. Both laptops would be connected to the TV so the couple could play games together.

While Black likes a contemporary look, she said she also likes a mix of styles and that the room can even be goofy.

It might also have magazines, newspapers and crossword puzzles on the chest or on the credenza where the television sits. There may also be books on shelves on either side of the credenza.

Stressing the importance of lighting, she said, "I like to have a multitude of different lighting in that room."

Ideas include recessed lighting and a lamp attached to the wall with a swing arm.

Hang an oversized picture of a beach or a favorite vacation spot, or someplace cheery or memorable, she said.

"It's nice to have, for instance, a little piece of where you've gone before," Black said. "Anything that cheers, ... brings another frame of mind. ... Some people like maps on the wall to figure where you're going next."

Books in the room can include travel books, and there may be items for folks to enjoy hobbies while they watch television, such as yarn and needles for knitting.

"I'm just thinking about a room where people can think of things other than work," Black said "You're trying to grab snippets of time to be with your loved ones." NL

Correction

In the Living Spaces section that ran in the April issue, the story "Staging to stay" incorrectly identified renovation photos for a bathroom. The images were the work of Tamatha Wolfel of Infinite Home Design in Wethersfield. The paper regrets the error.

Advice, thoughts and help for do-it-yourselfers

Businesses offer classes and blogs for great design at home

by Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writer

Local experts share their decorating know-how through blogs and hands-on workshops. Here is what a few had to say as to how they inspire those wanting to try their hand at decorating themselves.

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At one time there was no brick and mortar place to shop, or actual store to shop in, rather, owner Heather Grahling sat at her computer writing a blog about decorating trends.

"Over time, readers expressed interest in the projects I was doing in my own home, so many of my posts became more personal," Grahling said. "I love pushing the boundaries with colors and patterns, and I think that my followers love to see how far I will go."

Some of those design ideas include wallpapering ceilings in her own home.

"I have always been passionate about decorating, and the blog was a terrific outlet in which to become a part of that world," Grahling said.

In 2015, Grahling opened her shop in Farmington, bringing her ideas and the trends she wrote about out of the blogosphere and into living rooms.

Grahling did not give up her blog, however, as it continues to be a part of her shop's website.

"With the brick and mortar shop now open, I often use the blog as a way to convey the fun items that we are currently carrying in the shop," she said, adding that she also continues to write about do-it-yourself projects, showcasing local artists and designers and anything else that she feels "will be interesting to my readers and customers."

Through her blog, Grahling recently shared a personal story about her daughter's health and about her trip to the New York Now 2016 show, a post that included plenty of photos.

It is not just her blog that interests about 15,000 would-be decorators, but she has 11,000 followers on Facebook and 5,500 on Instagram.

"I utilize all aspects of social media to reach my readers," she said. "For example, even though I don't have an ecommerce website, I post most of the products from my shop on Instagram and Facebook. It gives my followers an idea of what we currently have, and I have even started shipping to all over the U.S. just based upon what viewers want from my Instagram feed."

Additionally, readers of her blog have asked her questions, and she has come to realize how deep this interaction can be for her followers.

"The blog makes a personal connection with the followers," Grahling said.

Vivid Hue Home is located at 775 Farmington Ave., or find the shop and Grahling's blog at vividhuehome.com. Follow her on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

In The House & Through The Garden

There is no reason to feel intimidated when taking a class at Simsbury's In The House & Through The Garden. They offer several classes and will walk a hopeful do-it-yourselfer through each and every step.

Thomas Mach opened his shop in the summer of 2015, and, right away, customers were intrigued with the Annie Sloan chalk painted items he had for sale. So much so that he stocks this special project paint and offers classes weekly.

The most popular class is "Annie Sloan 101" in which Mach said, "You learn all of Annie's different painting techniques and how to do modern or the rusty, chippy looks, two-color distressing," he said. The class also allows participants to learn how to mix colors.

"It's really the fundamental class, it's really hands-on," Mach said.

Participants paint their own board in order to get a feel for the paint and the finish they like. There is also an assortment of beer, wine, coffee, tea and appetizers to enjoy.

For those who do not already know, Annie Sloan is a British artist who developed her own paint specifically for refinishing furniture. The product is nontoxic, odorless and dries very quickly. The artist calls it chalk paint, even though there is no chalk in the product, but it does have a velvety finish. The paint is great for newbies because it does not require preparing a piece of furniture ahead of time and there is no priming or stripping necessary.

"Its not normal paint," Mach said. "It's not at all what you are used to using."

For those looking to move beyond the fundamentals, the shop's offerings continue with "I'm Having a Bad Chair Day," for those interested in painting fabric, which the Annie Sloan paint can also be used. There are also workshops for mirrors or picture frames for those who want to update something they already own.

Mach said, too, that he also does what he refers to as "Girls Night Out Evenings," in which a group of friends will come in to learn, sometimes for a bachelorette party or just to have fun with friends.

Other classes are for specific furniture refinishing projects, such as when participants bring in a coffee table or side table they own or found in a second hand shop and want to update.

"It's all about the workshops," Mach said.

The shop has 17 such events planned between April and June. Look for more information on its website www.inthehouseandthroughthegarden.com or visit it at 10 Jim Gallagher Way, Simsbury.

Cindarella's Attic

Cinda Fiamma of Cindarella's Attic in Wethersfield has been refinishing furniture for more than 30 years.

"I love it, it relaxes you so much," she said.

That might be easy for her to

say since she has decades of experience, but Fiamma assures those who have never tried it that they can also find success.

She has been offering refinishing classes for three years at her shop at 59 Wells Road.

"When you leave my classes, you will know the four basic steps and a technique," she said.

The steps include cleaning the piece of furniture to be refinished, painting it with one or two coats with a chalk mineral-based paint, smoothing it down, and the final step, putting on a topcoat to seal it.

Her basic class starts off small. Fiamma gets kitchen cabinet doors from a company in Minnesota that typically have a small flaw in them so the company will not sell them. She uses the doors to teach her refinishing techniques, and participants leave with a freshly painted tray that they did.

Her other classes are the kind in which participants bring in their own piece of furniture, a class she typically restricts to two people. This enables them to work on the piece, leave for lunch to give the paint time to cure, and come back to finish it later in the day.

"They just love it," Fiamma said, sharing the story about one customer who came in never having painted anything in her life, and she liked it so much she went home and refinished her entire bedroom set.

Fiamma said that for those who feel they might not have the artistic flair to try this, they, too, will like the finished piece. She will be there to walk them through each step.

For one thing, if it does not come out well, the American Paint Company paint she uses wipes off very easily.

"It's just a thing," she said. "You can't make a mistake."

These days, more clients are preferring to finish their piece with a distressed look, although she can teach them how to make a piece look modern or rustic or any number of other styles.

She also offers the Chippy Class, a technique that when done allows you to see layers of paint.

"Whatever they want to know, I have so many tricks I can show people, Fiamma said.

Cindarella's Attic is located at 59 Wells Road, Wethersfield. For more information visit cinda-rellasattic.com or call 860-563-0351. **NL**

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One stop shopping

Home, Garden & Lifestyle show will highlight unique, local goods

"This is for someone looking for a gift to give, someone who just wants a new piece of home décor, someone looking to do DIY projects or home renovations; there's something for everyone."

– Laurel Janow Larco

by Abigail Albair
Executive Editor

A block party will take over three properties off New Park Avenue in May and bring with it "something for the dreamer, designer and decorator in everyone," organizers said.

The Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show will be held Saturday, May 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., hosted by the West Hartford Home Design District, the Shops @ 485 New Park and 20 Jefferson Ave. inside and on the grounds of the latter two properties and inside and on the grounds of Home Design District member Raymour & Flanigan.

More than 60 local businesses, including interior and exterior designers, artisans and crafters will take part, many offering free workshops and demonstrations led by industry experts on the year's latest trends, according to a press release.

Food trucks will also be on site.

"It really will have a block party feel to it," explained Laurel Janow Larco, manager of Custom Framing Depot, located in The Shops @ 485 New Park.

Janow Larco has been organizing home shows at The Shops for the last several years, but said the businesses at 20 Jefferson Ave. and in the Home Design District had expressed an interest in a spring block party, which launched the collaborative effort.

"It's similar to what we've done before, just on a larger scale," Janow Larco said. "This one is more directed to home remodeling than our previous ones have been because there are so many different businesses involved."

The overall feeling will be an eclectic one due to the variety of vendors and businesses.

Details on business participants, vendors and workshops follow in Newington LIFE's guide to this show.

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Featured workshops

Water is your home's worst enemy
cloverNINE green building
10 a.m. C

RePurposing & RePlanting
Blaze & Bloom Vintage
10:30 a.m. B

Creating Curb Appeal
Bartlett Brainard Products
11 a.m. C

Refreshing Your Much Loved Art Work
Custom Framing Depot
11:30 a.m. B

Designing with the Latest Trends in Tile
Tile America
12 p.m. C

Get the Latest Looks for Less
Joe Cornfield's Wallpaper & Window Treatments
12:30 p.m. B

Waterproofing
Dalene Carpet One
1 p.m. C

How to Pack Your Breakables Properly
Daley Moving & Storage
1:30 p.m. C

Drapery 101- Styles & Trends
Budget Blinds
2 p.m. C

Latest Trends in Kitchen Design
Holland Kitchens and Baths
2:30 p.m. C

Cupcake Decorating
Classic Cakes
ongoing A

Massage
Therapeutic Bodyworks
ongoing A

Cycle, Barre and Yoga
LIFER Fitness Studio
ongoing A

Tree Planting and Care
Trout Brook Landscaping
ongoing C

Home, Garden

Home Design District businesses can help with sleek design and creative architecture.

Photo from the Home Design District Facebook page

"This is for someone looking for a gift to give, someone who just wants a new piece of art or home décor, someone looking to do DIY projects or home renovations; there's something for everyone."

The Home Design District, in its 10th anniversary year, is comprised of 16 businesses located within one mile that all offer products and services to help customers build, renovate, decorate, repair or furnish a home.

The Shops @ 485 New Park offers boutique shops offering art, clothing, picture framing, hand crafts, wall coverings, home accessories, gifts, vintage items, furniture and even photography studios and a bakery/café.

At 20 Jefferson Ave., customers find lifestyle services including specialty cakes, exercise, massage, floral arrangements and dog boarding and daycare.

"I think because it's a collaborative effort with so many different businesses with different backgrounds, we're going to get a different clientele walking through than we normally would," Janow Larco said. "We're hoping for a broader appeal."

The Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show will support the local arts by donating a portion of proceeds to Playhouse on Park. Trout Brook Landscaping will give away trees as part of the Connecticut Canopies Tree Replanting Campaign and is collecting donations of pet food to benefit Aid-A-Pet.

Admission and parking for the show is free. For more and updated information, visit www.485NewPark.com and www.HomeDesignDistrict.com.

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A reader's guide to the home show

Building A *20 Jefferson Ave.:*

Classic Cakes
Therapeutic Bodyworks
LIFER Fitness Studio
A Special Place Floral Design Studio
Planet Bark

Building B *485 New Park:*

Custom Framing Depot
Joe Cornfield's Wallpaper & Window Treatments
Blaze & Bloom Vintage
A Little Something Bakery
Panache on New Park
J&M Image Works
Hello Dahle
Whamsco Kitchens & Baths
Finestra Rossa Windows
Stella Blue Photography
Rowanberry & Lavender Photography
Love+Lash

Building C

Raymour & Flanigan:

Budget Blinds (outside)
Tile America (inside)
Surfaces in Stone (inside)
Raymour & Flanigan (inside)
Bartlett Brainard Products (outside)
Daley Moving and Storage (outside)
Dalene Carpet One (outside)
Coastal Tool (outside)
Trout Brook Landscaping (outside)
cloverNINE green building (outside)
Holland Kitchens and Bath (outside)
Barrieau Oil (outside)
The Ultimate Bath Store/The Granite Group (outside)
Marketing Solutions (inside)
The Home Design District (inside)

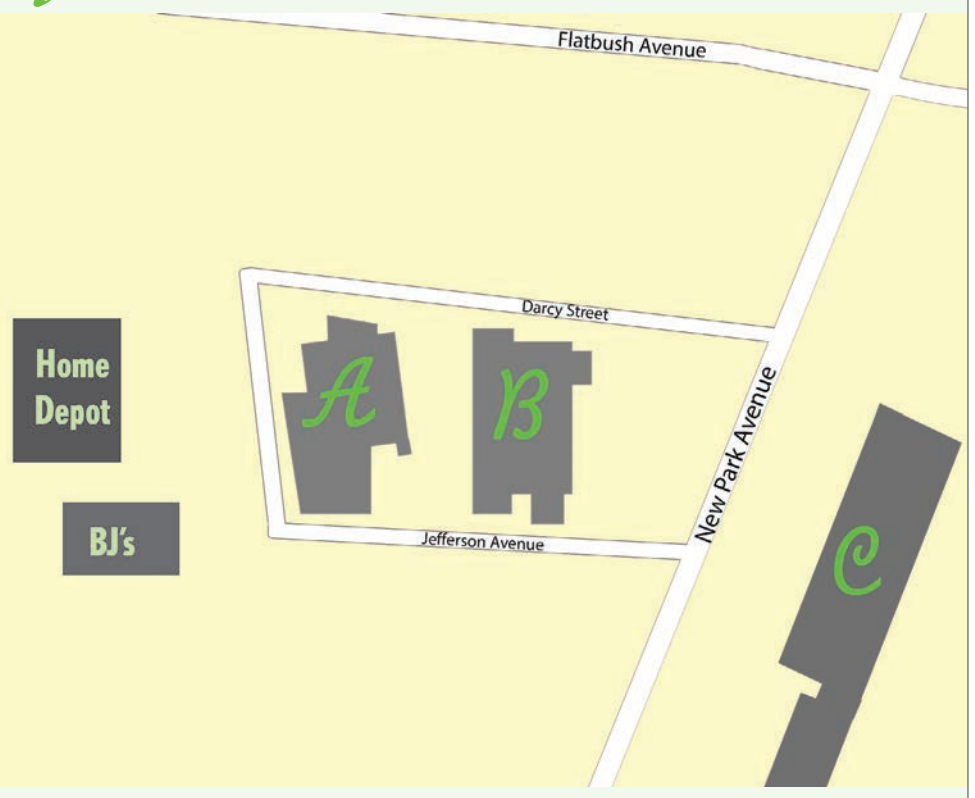
Vendors on site of Building B*:

(outside)
Grassillini Creations
Stock the Bar Candles
Twines & Vines
SuperLula
Creative Fusion
Bolga Baskets
Baker's Dozen Dog Treats
Inspiration & Creation Studio
Nicki's Necklaces

(inside)
The Glass Jar Natural Skincare
CMQ Photography
Here is Good Designs
The West Hartford Guide
Little Red Dala Designs
**More to come*

The Home Design District is welcoming the following prospective members to Building C

Butler Equipment (outside)
West Hartford Stone & Mulch (outside)
Simply Landscaping (outside)



Professional tool demonstrations will take place in the Building C parking lot with companies like Milwaukee Tool, Bosch, Festool, Kreg, Fein and more.

Food trucks on site

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Cooking up kitchen makeovers

See what you can do with $500 and a weekend

by Lynn Woike
Staff Writer

Whether your home is large or small, the kitchen is bound to be the busiest room in the house and will generally show the signs of use more quickly.

We turned to Peter Lemos of DreamMaker Bath and Kitchen in Newington for some suggestions on how to spruce it up – all for less than $500, a few basic skills and a weekend or less of your time.

"The trick is to take your time and avoid using creative shortcuts to finish quickly," he said.

Cabinets typically take up the most space in a kitchen, and their finish becomes worn over time.

"A good paint job can add years of life to them," Lemos said, adding, "Invest in good paint ... either oil-based or latex paint. Latex is easier to apply and clean up, but many argue that oil will give you a sturdier finish and is worth the extra effort. Choose an eggshell or semi-gloss finish. Flat paint will look too dull and high gloss paint will emphasize any imperfections.

He recommends removing the doors and drawer fronts, cleaning all surfaces with a strong cleaner such as TSP, lightly sanding every surface to be painted, then using a tack cloth to remove any dust.

Whether you paint the cabinets or not, new pulls are a quick and inexpensive upgrade.

Knobs are easiest to replace since there is only one hole; replacing handles requires a bit more effort.

Noting that most kitchens are poorly lit, Lemos said, "You can add loads of style and function for very little investment with a few strategically placed lights to illuminate work areas or dining spaces, or to just add to the general brightness of the kitchen. A new set of track lights, pendant lights or undercabinet lights can be a huge but simple addition to any kitchen."

Choose fixtures that match your décor, he said, noting that an ornate traditional chandelier over a sleek, contemporary island will not look right. Pay special attention to high-use areas like countertops or islands; bright, directed lighting in these locations can minimize accidents.

LED light bulbs use 95 percent less electricity than do incandescent bulbs. While they cost more upfront, they last longer and emit far less heat than other bulbs.

Another way to update the kitchen is to install a new tile backsplash.

"For a few dollars per square foot and an afternoon of work, you can turn that dull space between your counters and upper cabinets into a

virtuosic display of artistry," Lemos said.

"Gorgeous tiles in every color and texture imaginable are easily available and can be installed by most amateurs. You can find a good selection along with materials like adhesive and grout at your local home center. You will need to buy both field tiles and border tiles."

Lemos advises ordering at least 20 percent more than the square footage being covered to allow for fitting and waste. For a professional look, rent a wet saw to cut the tiles.

If you invest in these projects, "the payoff in style, function and economy will be priceless," Lemos said. **NL**

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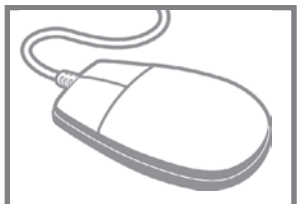

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How families can manage CRAMPED quarters

Young parents face difficult decisions regarding their living arrangements. The suburbs versus city debate is one many young married couples have had, and that discussion is often prompted by the arrival of children.

Even when choosing to live in the suburbs, starter homes for young couples and families may still leave space at a premium.

Choosing where to live is impacted by many factors, including commute time for working parents and school systems.

Sometimes, however, that means choosing a smaller home to start with and coping with cramped quarters. In these cases, parents need to get creative in order to live comfortably.

• Actively police clutter. Few things can make living spaces seem more cramped than clutter. Unsolicited mailings, old magazines and unused kitchenware are just a few of the items that can make small apartments seem even smaller. Discard junk mail the moment you walk through the door, making a daily effort to keep kitchen counters and tables, coffee tables and other areas that tend to accumulate clutter clear of clutter. Reducing clutter also makes homes safer for young children, making it easier for them to navigate a home while reducing choking hazards.

• Keep hosting duties to a minimum. Many men and women love to host friends and family, and that desire to host won't subside simply because you have limited space for entertaining. But even if you love to host, host more intimate gatherings so you are not forced to use your already limited storage space to store items, such as extra plates, utensils and drinking glasses, that you will only use every so often. Fewer guests means fewer items you need to store year-round.

• Go easy on the tots' toys. Parents of young children know that kids' toys take up a lot of space, and that's space that many city dwellers simply don't have. Rather than adding to youngsters' toy stash each month, explain to them that space is limited and that some older toys will have to go before new ones can be purchased. Donate old toys and let kids know their items will be given to less fortunate youngsters, as that may make kids feel better about parting ways with their toys. Set a good example by showing kids when you discard or donate older items before replacing them with new ones.

• Think vertically. Single-family home owners may not need to make much use of the vertical space in their homes, but such is not often the case with apartment dwellers or those living in condominiums or town homes. Utilizing vertical space in can be as simple as buying some shelving units or bookcases. To be safe, keep items the kids will use on lower shelves so they are not tempted to do some climbing to reach their toys or books. NL

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Out of Sight

How and where to get rid of what you no longer want or need

Once spring cleaning is done, there will be a collection of items that are no longer wanted. Three things can be done with them: toss, sell or donate.

Items that are broken, stained or worn out should be thrown away. Be sure to check which items can be recycled and which ones will need a bulky waste pickup.

Some items will be good enough to sell.

Ralph Labozzo, appraiser and auctioneer at Golden Gavel, said the business services customers who want a few items appraised and those who want the entire contents of a house dealt with and the premises swept clean.

Right now, he said, vintage comic books from the late 1950s and early 1960s are hot sellers – those with a cover price of 10¢, 12¢ or 15¢. Super heroes from the Golden Age (think Superman) to the Silver Age (think Batman) are all in demand.

In addition to comic books, Labozzo said musical instruments are selling well (think guitars and vintage saxophones). The same is true for Halloween and other holiday -themed ephermera from the early 1900s, and both vintage and contemporary game room items such as pinball and arcade games.

First edition leather bound limited edition books, especially if signed, along with coffee table books on the arts sell at auction.

There is no fee or obligation to have someone from the auction house come out and assess the items. Pick up would be scheduled for another time.

Items can also be sold online. Craigslist is especially good for large items that are difficult to pack and ship. It also saves you the service fee charged by eBay and Amazon.

Many clothing, accessories, jewelry and decorative items can be taken to a consignment shop provided they are in excellent condition. Items are priced with consideration given to condition, quality, brand, age, original purchase price, style and buyer demand. Consigners generally get between 40 percent and 55 percent of the sale price. A store's website will provide lists of items accepted – and those that are not – along with terms and conditions.

Some consignment shops deal specifically with furniture and other home accessories.

Sheri Jackson, longtime owner of Gillette Furniture Consignment in Wethersfield, said, "We love when people spring clean because we are often times the right fit for their lovely furniture and home décor."

Pub tables, sofas and desks are always in demand, along with console, coffee and end tables, and dining and bedroom sets, she said.

When working with large pieces of furniture, it's a common practice to begin with customers emailing photos of the items they would like to consign.

"We want to see what it is," Jackson said.

Style, condition and quality are all taken into account.

"We like to find the next happy home for their piece," she said.

Holding a tag sale is another way to get rid of just about anything. Try recruiting others in the area to join you – neighborhood sales attract more shoppers.

Most items in good condition can be donated, and most donations will be tax deductible. In addition to well-known organizations such as Goodwill and Savers, here are some places you can bring items.

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LIVING Spaces

Electronics

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Every town is required to establish a convenient location for recycling residential electronics such as computers, printers and televisions. For specifics, contact your town. Information is also listed on the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's website at ct.gov/deep.

Green Monster
260 Brook Street
West Hartford
860-897-1426
greenmonsterecycling.com
Just about anything with a cord or that operated on batteries can be brought to this recycling center for free. Hard drives are destroyed and nothing ends up in a landfill. The only items not accepted are washers, dryers, microwaves, vacuums, and appliances with refrigerant such as refrigerators, dehumidifiers, air conditioners and water coolers.

Furniture

A Hand Up Inc.
860-424-2980
ahandupinc.org
This organization based in West Hartford helps people transition from the streets into homes. Items must be new or gently used, modestly sized, basic and practical. Its current wish list includes twin and full bed frames, small sofas and love seats, small armchairs and recliners, dressers, nightstands, bookcases, end and coffee tables, television stands, lamps, kitchen tables and chairs. Pickups can be scheduled. Arrangements must also be made for dropping items off at the warehouse on Talcott Road in West Hartford. For more details, see ahandupinc.org/wish-list/.

Habitat for Humanity ReStore
500 Cottage Grove Road
Bloomfield
860-519-0828
hartfordhabitat.org/restore
This home improvement and donation center sells new and gently used furniture, home accessories and appliances. Pickups can be arranged.

Photo courtesy of The ReCONNstruction Center

Building materials

The ReCONNstruction Center
731 New Britain Ave.
Newington
860-597-3390

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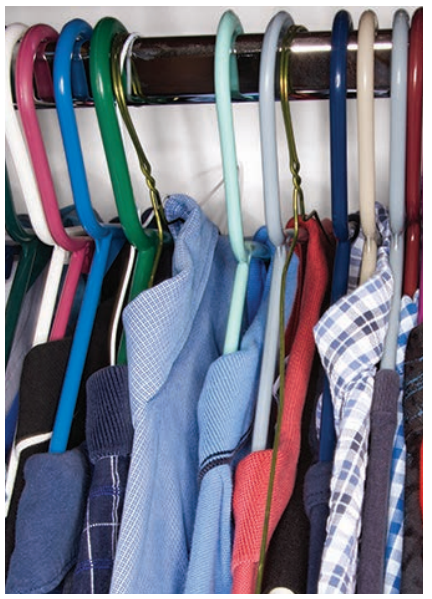
reconnstruction center.org
This charitable organization accepts good quality, new, pre-owned, antique, surplus and reusable building materials, lighting fixtures, appliances, kitchen cabinets, plumbing fixtures, doors, paint, wood stoves, commercial shelving, tools, architectural salvage, and replacement and original vinyl windows. Pickups can be arranged at no charge.

Habitat for Humanity ReStore
500 Cottage Grove Road
Bloomfield
860-519-0828
hartfordhabitat.org/restore
This center accepts building materials including cabinets, countertops, electical hardware, roofing materials, paint, wallcovering, tile, floor coverings, doors, windows, plumbing materials, cinderblocks and bricks. For donation pickups, email photos of items to barbara@hartfordhabitat.org, along with your name, address and phone number.

Clothing

The Clothes Horse
175 Park Road
West Hartford
860-233-1411
This thrift shop operated by the Junior League of Hartford accepts current fashions and accessories for women, men and teens, including outerwear, tuxedos and gowns, and vintage clothing and accessories. Everything must be clean and free of rips, stains and fading.

University of Connecticut Health Center Auxiliary Thrift Shop



270 Park Road
West Hartford
860-586-8047
Run by volunteers, this shop accepts high-quality used clothing and shoes for men and women, jewelry and handbags. Unsold or unwanted clothing is donated to other organizations that assist those in need.

Market Square Thrift Shop
230 Market Square, Rear
Newington
860-667-7174
This shop, benefiting the Church of Christ Congregational, accepts men's, women's and children's clothing, jewelry and accessories.

Favarh Thrift Shop
250 Albany Turnpike
Canton
860-693-2899
favarh.org
The shop accepts men's and women's clothing, shoes and accessories. Donations can also be left at Favarh's main office at 225 Commerce Drive in Canton.

Second Chance Shop
730 Hebron Avenue
Glastonbury
860-633-5188
and
12 Station Street
Simsbury
860-658-7152
Items that can be donated include clothing for infants, children, men and women, along with accessories such as purses, hats, ties, scarves and jewelry. Run by auxiliary volunteers proceeds, from these shops benefit the programs and services of The Village for Families and Children.

Housewares

The gift shop at your local senior center

The swap shack at your town's transfer station

Favarh Thrift Shop
250 Albany Turnpike
Canton
860-693-2899
favarh.org
The shop accepts housewares and giftware. Donations may also be left at Favarh's main office at 225 Commerce Drive in Canton.

A Hand Up Inc.
860-424-2980
ahandupinc.org
Items being accepted are pots, pans, dishes, glassware, coffee makers, microwaves, silverware, bakeware, mixing bowls, storage canisters, cooking utensils and small appliances. No formal china, stemware or high-end appliances. Clean and gently used sheets, blankets, comforters, mattress covers, towels, pot holders, bath mats, shower curtains, and small rugs may also be donated. Pickups and dropoffs need to be scheduled.

Market Square Thrift Shop
230 Market Square, Rear
Newington
860-667-7174
This thrift shop benefiting the Church of Christ Congregational, accepts small household appliances, dishes and glassware, home goods, gift items, toys and games.

The Clothes Horse
175 Park Road
West Hartford
860-233-1411
Among the items accepted are artwork, pottery, paintings, prints, housewares, books, decorations, unopened gifts and holiday items.

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860-633-5188
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12 Station Street
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860-658-7152
The shops accept household items such as china, glasses, linens, antiques and collectibles. No furniture, beds, cribs, strollers, car seats, exercise equipment or appliances can be donated. Run by auxiliary volunteers, proceeds from these shops benefit the work of The Village for Families and Children.

Books

Your library's used book sale

On the Road Bookshop
163 Albany Turnpike
Canton
860-693-6029
ontheroadbookshop.com
This store buys books in most subject areas, including art, Eastern and
Western philosophy, literature, scholarly books, very old books, leather sets and some recent textbooks. No romance novels, Reader's Digest books or book club editions are accepted. Book-related items such as bookends, bookstands, prints and ephemera are also purchased. If you have too many to bring in, someone will come to you. The owner urges people to call before throwing out anything. Store credit is also offered.

Bicycles

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Free Bike
828 Hopmeadow Street
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860-841-2611
simsbury.bike
This free multi-town bike share program accepts bikes that are in good condition (no rust, no repairs needed). Bikes left at The Bicycle Cellar at 532 Hopmeadow Street will be brought to Simsbury Free Bike.

Household hazardous waste

Special collections are held for household hazardous waste that is generally defined as toxic, flammable, reactive or corrosive materials. These include oil-based paints, thinners, pool chemicals, pesticides, mercury fever thermometers and gasoline.

April 30, Farmington Farmington High School, 10 Monteith Drive, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Simsbury, Avon and Canton residents.)

May 7, Newington, Town Garage, 281 Milk Lane, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Rocky Hill, West Hartford and Wethersfield residents.)

June 12, West Hartford, Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield residents.)

June 18, Simsbury, Public Works Facility, 66 Town Forest Road, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Farmington, Avon and Canton residents.)

June 25, Wethersfield, Webb School, 51 Willow Street, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Newington, Rocky Hill and West Hartford residents.)

July 9, Rocky Hill, Stevens School, 322 Orchard Street, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Newington, West Hartford and Wethersfield residents.)

September 24, West Hartford, Public Works Garage, Oakwood Avenue, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also serving Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield residents.) NL

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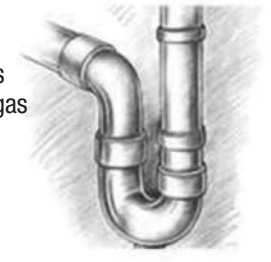

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Where to FIND IT

Spring Ring

With warmer weather comes a greater desire to be outside and moving. The Spring Ring comes with two circular trampoline-like pieces that let children and adults bounce the two balls it includes back and forth and allows for game creativity. It can be found at The Wooden Toy, 1273 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. For more information, visit www.thewoodentoy.com or call 860-529-1945.

Fabulous fabrics

Ready to spruce up your home for spring? If you're crafty, check out these colorful home decorator goods, perfect for making curtains and slipcovers – and change up your home for spring. Or use them to whip up tote bags, placemats, dog beds, even horse blankets! You'll find a wide selection of fabrics, all for $2.99 a yard, at Affordable Fabrics, 2119 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill, 860-563-7647.

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